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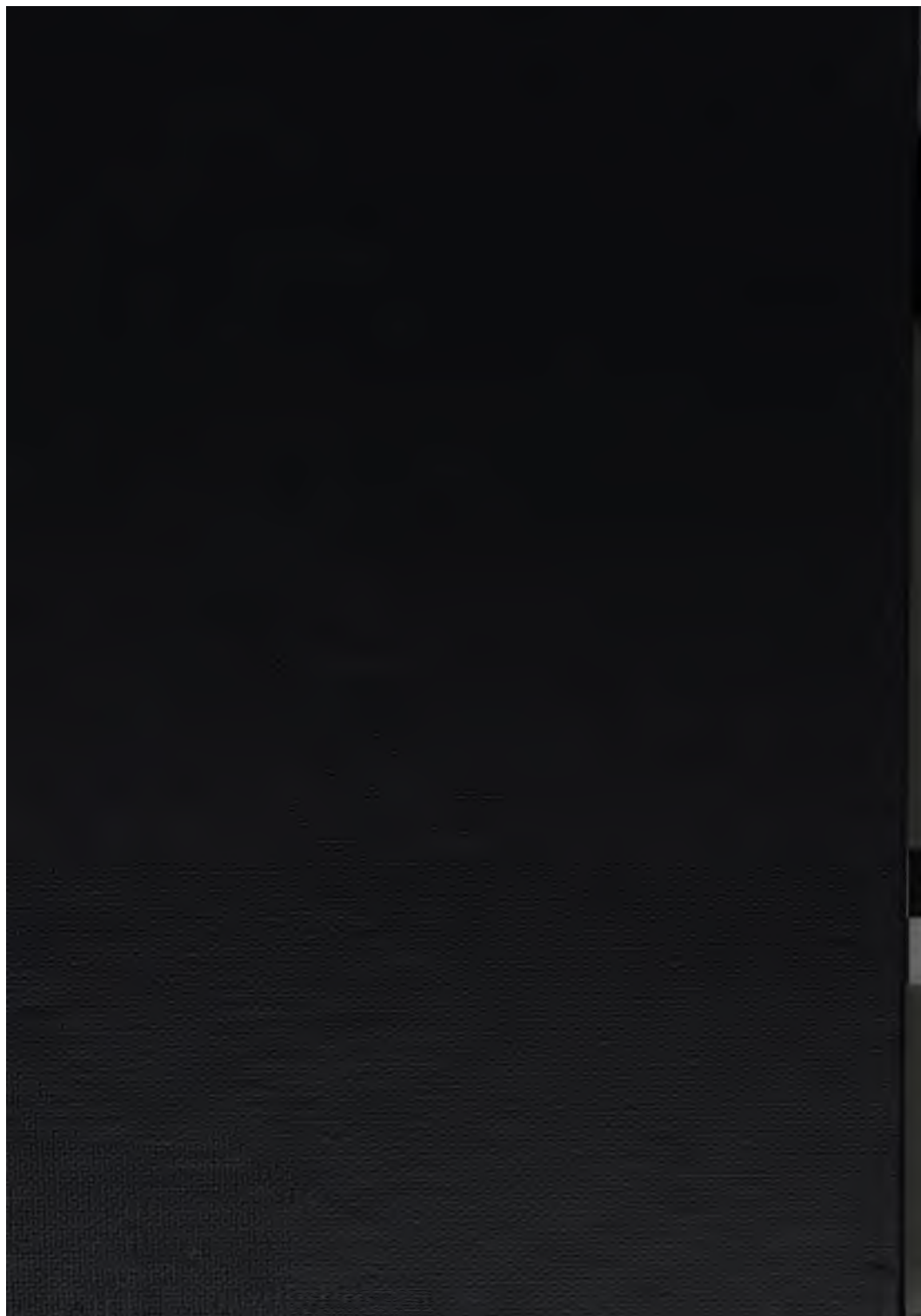
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*How to Deal with the Unemployed.*



*HOW TO DEAL  
WITH THE UNEMPLOYED*



# HOW TO DEAL WITH THE UNEMPLOYED

BY

MARY HIGGS

AUTHOR OF "FIVE DAYS AND FIVE NIGHTS AS A  
TRAMP AMONG TRAMPS"

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S. C. BROWN, LANGHAM & COMPANY, LTD.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE problem of the unemployed is claiming public attention. Not only from London, but from all over the country, comes the tale of increase of unemployment. The Labour Gazette of the Board of Trade for December, 1903, reported employment "dull" or "bad" in the staple trades of many northern towns. In Manchester township 1,128 persons were relieved as against 851 the previous year, and of these 228 are reported as "able-bodied and in good health." A volunteer canvass revealed 275 cases in a small area of 951 occupied houses, of whom 133 were heads of families with wives and children dependant. Within a brief period 2,850 men registered at a newly opened Corporation Labour Bureau.

This book is an attempt to examine this social phenomenon and separate it into its elements with a view to effective treatment. Increase of unemployment is a sign of disease in the body politic, which has its root in the fact that life is hampered by unhealthy conditions.

In a normal body what is harmful is excreted. Cells which cease to function properly, when they have reached the term of natural life pass harmlessly out of existence. But under circumstances of disease there is an increase of degenerate cells which become a source of danger. "Matter" or "microbes" rapidly multiply. The body makes an effort, more or less successful, to eliminate them, and life or death depends on the result.

Similarly the "vitality" of our country depends on its power to modify injurious social conditions, and to deal with ineffective units. Its "life," like that of all organisms, has been a struggle to master forces making for destruction. The existence of "social problems" of a pressing kind shows that some danger is attacking us. Deaths from disease are more common than deaths from violence, and the process of national decay has usually preceded national extinction. Disease is indicated by the presence of *an increasing number of individuals who do not function rightly*. Individuals, like cells, should be built effectively into the tissue of life, and each new generation should be absorbed into healthy existence. In an old nation the process of decay may be extremely rapid, and swift and effective cauterisation of spreading evils the only method of arresting disease. We see on every side in our

"slum" problem, individuals growing and increasing under unhealthy conditions. The chronic problem of the unemployed reveals the presence among us of men who are for the time being economically useless, and often socially harmful. These are often in the prime of life. The existence of unemployment of a temporary nature due to shifting of trade is one thing, to be met by greater facilities for fluidity of labour. The presence of a chronic "unemployed" problem is another, and is a phenomenon of disease analogous to a "gathered" finger. In this book an attempt is made to diagnose the disease by separating it into its elements, and pointing out the directions in which to look for cure. It is important at the outset to recognise that *obviously* unhealthy "cell"—the tramp. Competent observers assert that he is increasing 100 per cent. If so let us beware.

After examining the malady of unemployment in various aspects, we must, as a physician would do, ascertain to what extent the natural reactions of the body are coping with the disease. Therefore the already existing efforts to deal with the unemployed problem are examined.

There are other countries which suffer from similar disease, and as a physician knows that certain remedies have proved effectual or are palliatives, and so prescribes accord-

ingly, we must try to gather all possible hints with regard to effective remedies which have been tried abroad.

It would, however, require many social observers in different countries to lay secure foundations for the "Science of Labour," and all the writer can attempt is to sketch the treatment to be adopted with the aid of the "Report of the Commission of Labour with regard to Agencies and Methods for dealing with the Unemployed" (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1893). It is much to be regretted that this Report has not been annually issued up to date, as it would afford the student of the Science of Labour a mine of information and enable him to form a right judgment as to the direction of social progress. Accurate knowledge is the basis of right action. Such a Report would supply the latest information as to the success or the reverse of social experiments, and the advantages of detailed and exact knowledge are so obvious as to constitute an argument of great force in favour of a Government Department of Labour. It is impossible for a private individual to obtain accurate information. Facts are essential to right diagnosis. With regard to the student of social pathological phenomena it should be recognised that for purposes of study some equipment is necessary. The use of a microscope to examine individual cells must be replaced by the use

of some social institution in which the unfortunate victims of wrong conditions can be detained for examination. The writer is fortunate enough to possess a "social microscope" of this description, in constant use for some years.

The attempt to deal effectively with individuals leads to knowledge of existing institutions in a natural way. The writer has thus obtained opportunities of studying the practical working of the Poor Law; and of various agencies, such as the Salvation Army, dealing with destitution; and of questioning workers to see if conclusions tallied.

Practical acquaintance with the symptoms of a disease may also be obtained by undergoing it. The writer claimed this "finishing touch" to her education by spending "Five Days and Five Nights as a Tramp among Tramps." The record of this experience can be obtained from the Secretary, Women Guardians Association, 65, Barton Arcade, Manchester, price 1d.

The writer gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness to the following works:—

"The Problem of the Unemployed."

John A. Hobson. Methuen & Co.

"For Efficiency." Arnold White. Hulton & Co. Manchester.

"A Colony of Mercy" and "Britain's Next Campaign." Julie Sutter. H. Marshall & Co.

- "Life and Labour in London." Charles Booth.  
"Darkest England," General Booth, and  
"Reports" of Salvation Army.  
"Famishing London." F. A. McKenzie. Hodder & Stoughton.  
"Royal Commission on Labour." Eyre & Spottiswoode.  
"Municipal Workshops." Charity Organisation Society, 15, Buckingham Street, Strand.  
"Report on National Conference on the Unemployed," and "Extracts," compiled by Percy Alden. Twentieth Century Press. London.  
"Green's History of the English People."

The writer is painfully conscious that the treatment of so vast a subject in so small a compass is necessarily very imperfect. Each division might well take a treatise and the gradual compilation of accurate knowledge would afford data for wise State action. But if disease is present we are often obliged to attempt rapid diagnosis, and act upon it, or the patient may expire while we wait.

May the wisdom of the Great Physician rest upon all who are willing to work for the salvation and regeneration of our country.

*April, 1904.*

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## CHAPTER I

### THE TRAMP

A MAN comes slouching down the street, his boots betray the fact that he is a tramp; his garments are filthy, the bottoms of his trousers are ragged, and his coat is buttoned over to hide the absence of a waist-coat; a dirty "comforter" conceals the loss of collar and tie, and perhaps the absence of any proper under-garment. He begs—what else can he do? No one would employ him. Where does he sleep? Perhaps in the casual ward, but the food there given will scarcely sustain him for the long tramp to another workhouse, and the work he has to do may be hard relatively to his strength. He can but drift from day to day, a piece of social flotsam and jetsam, dependent on charity for daily bread.

Yes! there is one more thing that he can

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do; he can begin deliberately and systematically to prey on the society that has ejected him. He is an "outcast," but in that vocation he has plenty of society. He will find a female as a partner in life (if not a wife); he may have children, born "on the road." He is a "tramp," but he may have a regular income, regular in irregularity, sufficient to sustain him and wife and children in what, in comparison with work-house diet, is plenty.

Let us visit *incognito* a common lodging-house. Here sits a negro, waited on by his mistress; he was once a sailor, doubtless he has many ways of earning a livelihood. It has been a gala-day in the Park near by, but the weather was bad. He got nothing, so he sends his "wife" out to beg, and she returns not unsuccessful; meanwhile he entertains the company with a story of the clever way he robbed another mistress. Little children are running about the room; a girl of twelve sits by her mother, who is crocheting the mats that she sells from door to door. He advises the company to keep your cash safe by hiding it in the pocket of the woman you sleep with. Evidently he is able to get and keep money by his wits. A

blind beggar comes in, wet with the rain, led by a black dog ; he soon has a tasty meal prepared for him. A lame man with a villainous countenance, who also seems well provided for, then enters. A mere beggar, neither blind nor lame, returns from a begging round. He has been out with a mate, and they have divided between them a certain district, but it has been very wet and their luck was bad. Never mind, better luck another day ! His wife, who has a child running about whom she frequently chastises, borrows a meal for him, and he also feasts well. A young woman, who relates stories to the company of various accidents which her nose has suffered through violence, and sighs for a pint of porter, is jokingly offered a quart of ale to keep her tongue still for a quarter of an hour. Dissipation has marked her face more than accident. The room fills ; every sentence uttered is profane. A young man plays with a remarkably fine baby born "on the road." A woman comes in and speaks of the healthiness of such a life. It is a "travelled" company. Some few have been stationary for weeks, but most have come from somewhere far off—from races or galas—and are on the tramp to others. No

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one seems in real want. As the evening goes on the fun waxes fast and furious, with jest, repartee, and song. It is a merry life! About eleven o'clock all tumble into filthy beds, grown-ups and children together. The sanitary accommodation for all the motley assembly is one small waterless w.c., and a tiny sink in the living room, where men lie on the benches all night. All sleep late save a few who are roused early, being genuine working men. We will not wait to see them astir, but escape from vermin and dirt to the fresh air as they will.

What chance has the individual born into such a life, and what outlet does our social system provide from it?

Is it the direct product of our present organised society? The steps down are terribly easy. A short period of worklessness, and the shelter of a home is lost. It is necessary to seek work, therefore one must tramp. Respectable lodgings are soon out of the reach of a diminishing purse, the shelter of the common lodging-house must be sought, But personal cleanliness is lost after a short sojourn in such surroundings, and it may be also cleanliness of speech and life. The casual ward then! Here is cleanliness surely

carried to extremes! Yes; for the protection of the workhouse, but not of the tramp. He is bathed, it is true; his garments may be "stoved," but he has no chance to wash them; instead, the work he has to do may still further wear them out. The food is miserable, gruel perhaps unsalted, perhaps sweetened to nauseousness, and a thick slice of dry bread. No drink, not even water, to quench thirst. This is the supper, when arriving tired, perhaps wet and thirsty; then bed at once, an uneasy bed, blankets on wire netting that abstracts the heat from the body, or on planks, perhaps in a stone cell. The same unpalatable breakfast, without tea or coffee, or any proper drink, and then work, steady and uninteresting, a frugal dinner of bread and cheese or broth, and the same supper, bed, and breakfast, and then, liberty! Is it likely that a similar experiment will be tried except in dire necessity? If shelter is asked again at the same place within one calendar month, four days of this diet and treatment is the penalty. Consequently it is useless to think of stopping in the neighbourhood to seek work. One must tramp again! One must pawn something to get a lodging and food; so article after article disappears.

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What next? One hears of charity; it is hard to beg, but necessary. "A copper for a night's lodging, sir." "A bit of bread, missus." Yes, folks do give; it is easier to beg than starve; and so one is a "tramp." It is hard to struggle upward, and easy to descend; to pick up a woman, who may be also a bread-winner. She may hawk articles; or beg effectively, or get money by immoral means. So one becomes a "loafer." Life is easier so: if there are children it is a good tale; folk's hearts are softer to a man with a starving wife (?) and children, than to a solitary fellow trying to find a place on the ladder of life. Character rapidly deteriorates, drink is to be had, company is plentiful. The life is not so bad after all! We have variety, we meet old friends, we are free, even free to ill-treat and desert our partner and try our luck with another. A sharp eye and ready wit, a strong hand over your "wife" (who will love you best if you ill-treat her a little and keep her under). All organised society is your dupe or your prey. "*Facilis descensus Averni.*" But when you are *there*, it is not so bad! Foul language, foul surroundings do not count. "A free life and a merry one!"

Yet with reference to the "body politic"—the social organism—these human units, living such a life, are singly and collectively both signs and causes of disease. Every one is familiar with the symptoms of a gathered finger. The minute cells of which our skin is composed, in the ordinary way discharge their functions painlessly, but from some cause or other their normal life is interfered with. They "gather," they become diseased, "pus" forms, the finger discharges. Unless this "matter" is drawn out and eliminated from the system, these symptoms increase, the degenerate cells multiply. Their presence is at once a *sign* and a *cause* of disease. Unless speedy means are taken to reduce their number, inflammation spreads and becomes acute, "proud flesh" is formed, the member may mortify.

The fact that is at the bottom of the process is, that certain cells through injury or decay cease to function rightly, and become centres of disease. The body makes an effort more or less successful to get rid of them. Health or disease depend on the vital power of the organism, and a return to normal conditions only takes place on the



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disappearance—the extrusion from the body—of the unhealthy parts. In a feeble body the symptoms, if dealt with locally, reappear in another part.

The presence of the “tramp” and the “loafer” is a sign of social disease, the multiplication of the species would be a sign of national decay and death. Therefore the problem of the unemployed is the fundamental social problem of our age; if it were solved many others would disappear.

If we endeavour to work out some problem in arithmetic we use many primary processes in the solution of one question. If we are to gain an insight into our present-day social problem we must appeal to certain primary Divine laws, which, if obeyed, will bring society into true relationships. These laws are as certain as the laws of number, and if disobeyed, they produce social problems which are insoluble, unless we restate our conditions, and bring them into line with God's requirements. For example, certain evils are sure to flow from slavery, because slavery itself is disobedience to primary law. No readjustment of the *institution* of slavery has ever availed to get rid of these evils. A restatement of the

whole problem was necessary, and this involved the *abolition* of slavery.

The existence of a problem which has been attacked by many methods, and yet has not yielded to them, shows the need for a return to primary principles. Such a problem is that of the "unemployed." So far from yielding to remedies, under present social conditions want of employment appears to be on the increase. It is time to ask, "What great primary law are we disobeying when, in the wealthiest country in the world, we breed tramps and loafers?" Certain arrangements made by society with a view to its own well-being may in themselves be good, but amid changing times they become obsolete, effete, harmful, and must be replaced by others. All vital phenomena obey deep laws, and cannot be settled without reference to them. The question, "If two horses eat a bag of corn in an hour, how much will they eat in three hours?" cannot be settled by rule of three, but can only be solved in reference to the law of life, which involves appetite as a factor. So the tramp and the loafer as a factor in our civilisation cannot be dealt with effectively by the machinery of an age when employment was

mainly stationary. Elimination of the tramp is not possible by such a method. His life avoids workhouses, and finds other channels, except in dire need. He tends to multiply and reproduce his kind, and his presence is a social danger. We pay dearly for him. Besides the cost of workhouses and police courts and prisons, we fight a sanitary battle with small-pox and other evils caused by his natural uncleanness, and "charity" of some kind supports him and his family. Yet all this *does not solve the problem*. Back then to *primaries*: for it is no more insoluble than any other. The "Commonwealth" as an ideal dawned centuries ago upon our race, and has never been lost sight of. Men are standing puzzled before the phenomena of the spread of pauperism alongside of the growth of wealth. They are inclined to refer each individual instance to individual failure, and are loath to acknowledge that something is radically wrong. Yet again and again society is thrown back on fundamentals for the real solution of its root problems, and progress is only made by the decay and extrusion of some conception that has been regarded as a basal fact. The feudal system must at one time have seemed

the Divine order of society. God Himself was the great Suzerain. Slavery also seemed a law of nature founded on distinctions of race. Nothing but the disappearance of the fundamental idea of an institution before a higher ideal suffices to supplant evils deeply rooted in imperfect conceptions of the underlying laws of God. The perception of liberty swept away feudalism, the perception of equality sweeps away slavery, the perception of brotherhood will sweep away non-employment. Yet even after an idea is outworn the effects of it remain, surrounding growing life as bracts surround buds. These slowly become superfluous and injurious. Relics of feudalism still hamper our English constitution, and reversions to slavery still occur in the midst of freedom. Yet a great leap forward is taken if we cease modifying and applying the old rule, stating and restating the problem in the old terms, and wondering at its non-solution. Nothing but a plunge into conceptions of freedom could shake feudalism. The idea of total abolition of slavery, the ideal of absolute equality, had to dawn on men before the institution of slavery could be rooted up. Even so we must reach

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forward to the *total abolition of unemployment* as a practical ideal, and ascertain its ground in the Divine law. The serf and the slave have disappeared, why not the tramp and the loafer?

The primary law of God is, "Six days shalt thou labour." A state of society in which the carrying out of this commandment daily, is impossible for a number of individuals, is bound to be one of disease. This law should be enforced by the sternest of all sanctions: "If a man will not work neither let him eat." All law needs, as Bentham has shown, some sanction to enforce it. The human unit debarred from profitable labour turns to prey on society. Throughout the animal creation this sanction is enforced. The life of an animal is spent in obtaining sufficient food for the maintenance of life, and the true discharge of its functions; the career of insect, bird, or beast, is a life of activity directed to this end. If in any case labour is suspended, as in the queen bee or drone, it is only in recognition of increase of function. When the special function has ceased, drones are sternly stung out of existence.

But the sluggard mind of man has hitherto

failed to attain to the level of the wisdom of creation. Man alone *breeds drones for the reproduction of drones*, and then stands aghast before a human hive overburdened with drones! What shall we say to a "Society for the reproduction of drones"! Yet that is what our present social arrangements with reference to the tramp and the loafer amount to. We manufacture them, however, at both ends of society, and in the strange chaos of our times "extremes" often meet. The "gentleman" and the "loafer" may often be found side by side in Shelters and Homes, "poverty" making literally "strange bedfellows."

The workless man is so constant a presence that we have become familiar with him, and the phenomena of men in the prime of manhood lounging about our market-places, begging at our doors, holding out a money-box for a copper, even parading the streets, no longer excites wonder, though it may create uneasiness. In addition to the actual tramp element, demoralisation of our working classes is proceeding apace. Fifty years ago the chronic beggary of "unemployed," the solicitation of the public as a matter of course by men armed with "official" collecting

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books, and the formation of large charitable relief funds, and even processions as public advertisement of need, were unknown. Occasionally dire distress like the cotton famine might call for extraordinary methods, now every winter sees some trade or other "in distress," and sturdy workmen begging more or less shamefacedly. The demoralising effect of this state of things spreads rapidly.

What has brought us to such a pass? Is there anything similar in past history? Great disturbance of normal relationships is inevitable when we consider the rapid industrial revolution through which we have been passing. But what has enriched the country as a whole should surely be for the "common wealth," unless there are present in our social arrangements, conditions that *artificially* bar the settlement of society into a suitable form for the healthy development of each separate unit.

Our country some centuries ago successfully overpassed a similar crisis. The problem of the "sturdy beggar" has already been tackled by our nation. The plague of 1381, which swept England like a besom, gave rise to the phenomenon of the "free

labourer," who was also a "landless man," who wandered in search of work, and being master of the labour market, easily became the "vagrant." Legislation did all it could to fix him in the parish, and to bind him to serve some master. The contrasts of life took hold on the imagination of men, and vague discontent settled upon the people, finding utterance in the preaching of John Ball and the visions of Piers the Ploughman.

"Things will never go-right in England so long as there be villains and gentlemen . . . they are clothed in velvet, and warm in their furs and ermines, while we are covered with rags; they have leisure and fine houses, we have pain and labour—the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that men hold their state." "Hunger works her will in the idler and waster."

Stern punishment was meted out to "the waster who will not work, but wanders about." He was pilloried and mutilated, even condemned to death for the third offence; but industrial revolution was too strong for legislation. The social disorder was swollen by changes from agriculture to sheep-farming over wide areas. These glutted the labour market and created "a



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vast mass of disorder"—a host of "broken men."

Yet this great mass of discontented poverty was dissipated by laws which were aimed, not at repression, but at the *removal of the cause*. A Royal Commission was appointed to discover some way of *enforcing labour on the idle and settlement on the vagrant*. The result was the "Poor Law" of 1562, enlarged and confirmed in 1601, which made a clear distinction between these and the impotent and destitute. Each town or parish became responsible for *the employment of able-bodied mendicants*, and "Workhouses" were created. *Compulsion to work* was the principle of the old Poor Law. The 43rd Elizabeth does not authorise relief to any but the impotent *except in return for work*. This is still the law, but it appears from Parliamentary returns that payment for work became the most unusual form in which relief is administered. The Poor Law returns for the year ending March 25, 1832, stated that out of £7,036,968 expended in relief less than £354,000 was paid for work.

The result of the Poor Law when first passed was a gradual diminution of social distress. Green (chap. vii., sec. 5) points

out that this legislation was followed by degrees by "the entire cessation of the great social danger;" "the more careful and constant cultivation of the land doubled production;" "much of the surplus labour which had been flung off the land by the commencement of the new system was recalled to it." Private persons were forbidden under heavy penalties to give doles to beggars, except "broken meats." Power was given to take up idle children and appoint them to masters of "husbandry and craft;" the habitual beggar might be committed to a "House of Correction." (Act 39 of Elizabeth provided for the erection of such houses and the punishment of vagabonds therein.) He might even in the last resort be put to death.

Thus it became "the expressed conviction of the English nation that *it was better for a man not to live at all than to live a profitless and worthless life.*" The result was a toning up of the whole national life; "an intense hatred of rascality;" an attempt "to bring the production and distribution of wealth under the moral rule of right and wrong. The Government was enabled to pursue in detail "a single and serious aim at the well-

being—well-being in its widest sense—of all members of the commonwealth.” The idea was that no man may do what is an injury to the commonweal. “Workmen were not to be allowed to take unfair advantage of scantiness in the labour market to exact unfair wages. Capitalists were not to be allowed to drive the labourers from their holdings and destroy their healthy independence.” Antagonism of interests was to be exchanged for relations in which “equity was something more than a theoretic principle,” and “employer and employed were alike amenable to law in the interests of the commonwealth.” The spirit of the nation was set free for high aims and hopes, and the result was seen in a glorious uprising of the inner life of the people. Literature flourished, enterprise won new victories, enemies were overcome. The period that followed this wise legislation is the foundation of our national greatness.

The causes of the backward wave which partially swept away these wise laws and fostered the worst forms of pauperism lie mostly in deterioration of methods of Poor Law relief—from three causes. (See “Report on Unemployed,” Pt. I., p. 358.)

First : *Avoidance of trouble.* It is less trouble to afford relief gratuitously than to require work in return for it.

Second : *Difficulties of superintendence.* The superintendent of pauper labour has to consider what is a fair day's work for a given individual, his strength and habits considered, and whether he has in fact done the amount he ought to have done. Such careful superintendence fitted to individual needs is rarely given. If work is done in gangs character is apt to deteriorate, as the worst in the parish are sure to be among the number. The plan of each parish setting its poor to work also led to great irregularities in payment.

But third : *The selfish interests of employers* led to great mismanagement. Parish employment does not benefit any one individual, but under other systems of relief the immediate employers of labour can throw on the parish *a part of the wage of their labourers.* Methods of relief therefore came to be preferred out of which profit could be extracted under the mask of charity. Relief became a dole in aid of wages. It was demoralising to all concerned, and exceedingly uneven in its administration. It

fostered pauperism to such an alarming extent that legislation became imperative. The emergence of common-sense took place little more than half a century ago. Since 1834 we have been slowly retracing our steps. It is not a return to old methods, but a modification of our methods to suit the times, and *greater strictness with the loafer*, that is strongly to be advocated. Events are forcing us forward to the position of our forefathers. The law of God says, "If a man will not work neither let him eat," but we cannot with present social arrangements enforce this law. The heart of the nation is right. It is our inner conviction that "It is better for a man not to live at all, than to live a profitless and worthless life," but it is not our *expressed conviction*. Our great and noble struggle for individual freedom has masked the fact that liberty to do right is the only true line of progress. We need to revert to "an intense hatred of rascality" in every shape and form, and to combine the utmost tenderness towards suffering with prevention of that sin which sooner than any other corrupts and corrodes human nature—the sin of idleness. No Englishman should be prevented from keeping the law of God :

"Six days shalt thou labour." Each social unit should be definitely profitable to the nation. Those who are not so should be sorted out and effectively dealt with, to prevent, at any rate, the transmission of their idleness to posterity.

It may be said, however, "Is not our treatment of the tramp already severe enough, and along the lines here indicated?" Only bare food and shelter are found him, and this in return for work. The reply is that the present arrangements with regard to the tramp are so ineffective that practically they only touch a small percentage of the class. It is estimated that there are at least 10,000 regular tramps. In Manchester during last winter large numbers of men preferred to sleep in the brickfields rather than enter the tramp ward. Shelters are notoriously on the increase. As no one enters the tramp ward except through necessity, it does not act except as a deterrent from pauperisation. As such it is forbidding enough. One wonders it has any occupants when the scanty and unpalatable food, the regulations for cleanliness, the uneasy bed, and the enforced labour are considered. As a matter of fact prison is preferred to it. As

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regards women (and there is a large class of migratory females) the provision of accommodation for *six* women in a large Union shows how little it is used.

The fact is, it is a relic of the bygone time when legislation was arranged with a view to *stop* migration. Its preservation in its present form ranks with that custom of "removal" to the native parish on which our Unions still spend a large amount of money. The theory is that a man is bound by inseparable ties to his native parish, and that it is wrong for him to wander. Therefore the law treats him as a "vagrant," and meets out to him worse than prison fare.

But the industrial conditions of to-day *necessitate* a large amount of itinerancy. If a man cannot obtain work in his native town he is bound to wander in search of it. It is his duty to try to maintain himself and his family. He may have stayed on till the last moment in search of work in his native town, and be really penniless. But he is not a pauper. He is a "tramp" of necessity. He may—and probably will—degenerate rapidly, if there are social conditions which are all against him. He cannot sleep in a workhouse and get out next day early to

seek work (except with special permission). All the Shelters which ask for work in return for bed and breakfast find that if they get such a man in by three o'clock he can earn his food and get out early to seek work. Only our antiquated Poor Law forces him to wait till six for admission, work the next day, and then stay in till nine. If he stays one night he is released about eleven!

The above remarks apply to the genuine "working man" "on tramp." What proportion does he bear to the "tramp" proper? It is difficult to ascertain.

Arnold White gives the following analysis of 6,000 "out of works" unable to afford 4d. for a common lodging-house :—

	Per cent.
Hopelessly submerged by disease, physical incapacity, &c....	... 40
Unskilled labourers who could be clothed into fitness	... 40
Discharged soldiers, labourers, artisans without tools	... 20
	<hr/> 100

Charles Booth in "Life and Labour of the People" (vol. I., p. 107) gives the



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following analysis of 4,000 of the very poor visited *in their own* homes :—

	Per cent.
Loafers ... ..	4
Drink and thriftlessness ... ..	14
Illness, large families, misfortune...	27
"Question of unemployment" ...	55
	<hr/>
	100

These statistics naturally differ from those of the "floating poor" given by Arnold White.

At the Labour Home in Manchester belonging to the Central Mission, the Superintendent estimates that one quarter of those assisted belonged to the lowest strata. Those who passed through the Refuge provided for the utterly destitute received beds with meals in return for work in the labour yard to the number of 9,999 in 1902. Each man stays, at most, three nights, seeking work during the morning.

Colonel Lamb, late of Hadleigh Farm Colony, gives 40 per cent. as "casuals" who apply for relief. He says 20 per cent. of these come from the professional classes. The following is his analysis of results :—

"Of those who are received at the receiving station one-third leave during the first month. Of this one-third, one-third are 'loafers,' that is habitual vagrants; one-third are 'unfit,' that is physically or mentally feeble; one-third is salvable, but restless, and cannot be kept without compulsion. The remaining two-thirds pass on to the Colony proper, having sufficient sense to appreciate its advantages, and remain for periods that average six months."

This 33 per cent. will approximate closely to the 40 per cent. of Arnold White if we consider that about 7 per cent. of the latter would be reclaimed by such humane treatment as they would receive on the Salvation Army Farm Colony.

The Manchester figures of 25 per cent. may be smaller because of brisk local demand for employment.

We are not, however, obliged to regard all this large percentage as belonging to the "loafer" class, that is, those who shirk work under any circumstances. These numbers are swelled by the "incapable" from other causes, who being "hopelessly submerged" rank as "tramps." The census tables for 1901 give 120,285 male paupers, but if we

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subtract males under 10 and above 75 we get 89,561, while Charles Booth gives class B—those who live on scraps of employment or sink into pauperism—as 317,000 in London alone; so evidently only a small fraction of the population belongs to the actual “loafer” class—those who prefer idleness to work. Charles Booth remarks: “Only 13 per cent. really go under through drink and thriftlessness, above the very poor.” The conclusion of such a competent observer of working-class life is as follows: “Thorough interference by the State with the lives of a small fraction of the population would tend to make it possible, ultimately, to dispense with any socialistic interference with the lives of the rest.” (“Labour and Life of the People,” vol. I., p. 107.)

The social arrangements of Germany which are exciting so much interest will be referred to later on. It is sufficient to say that the House of Correction is the *basis* of the German system. The State has stepped in to say, “If a man is found starving and ragged, begging and loafing, it must be his own fault.” But this can only be said after a system of relief has been organised which enables a man to find an avenue to work.

Relief stations enable a self-respecting working man to earn his way, and Land Colonies form a refuge for the destitute. Then any loafer can be called upon to answer for himself to the police, and the inveterate vagabond finds himself landed in a penal House of Correction. So effective is this method that it has made the genuine tramp swarm out of the Fatherland. ("Colony of Mercy," p. 159.)

The result of the "Report of the Commission of Labour with regard to Agencies and Methods for dealing with the Unemployed" (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1893) is to draw attention to these foreign methods of dealing with tramps and beggars. For the vagrant, the discharged prisoner, and the lowest grade of inefficient labour, these Labour Colonies are highly recommended. They would form a Colony of Refuge, or receptacle, for Charles Booth's "Class A." They have become such in Germany. A table, showing for twenty-two Colonies the number of men who have been imprisoned, brings out the broad fact that three-quarters of the colonists admitted in two years had been imprisoned or locked up. Possibly offences in Germany are more

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swiftly visited with imprisonment, and many may have been "locked up" for *being* tramps. Still the Colonies are evidently a refuge for the *lowest* class of submerged. In Belgium there are Colonies nominally "free," but really penal, because the worst class have drifted into them. One (Hoogstraeten) is for the infirm, and one (Merxplas) for the able-bodied. The inmates are classified with reference to conduct, the worst being completely isolated.

The Dutch also have a penal Labour Colony at Veenhuizen.

The law against tramps and beggars is very severe in Belgium: able-bodied vagrants may be sentenced to detention in the "depôts de mendicité" for periods of from two to seven years. All individuals found in a state of vagabondage or begging are arrested and taken before the tribunal of police. The cost of the maintenance of the prisoner is charged to the commune. Merxplas has a population of over 3,000 "able-bodied" men, consisting exclusively of able-bodied beggars and vagrants, divided into four classes:—

1. Immoral and unmanageable (isolated).
2. Ex-convicts, and those of bad conduct.

3. Well-conducted ex-convicts.

4. New colonists committed for simple police offences.

Besides this penal colony there is a "House of Refuge" at Wortel, containing 1,800 persons. These are sent by their own consent, by order of the local authorities, not committed by the police. This, and the colony of Hoogstraeten (for infirm, or partially infirm people), are intended exclusively for the benefit of people whose poverty has arisen from circumstances beyond their own control.

In Germany entrance to, and exit from, the Land Colony is free, but the existence at the bottom of the system of the "House of Correction," tends to drive into the Colonies all who cannot otherwise maintain themselves. The *free* entrance and exit, however, produces the "Colony-bummler," alias the "loafer," in and out of Colonies as he is in and out of workhouses. To "bummel" means to "loaf," but it has come to mean not to loaf *in* the Colony, but to arrive at it frequently, to loaf outside, and then drop into the Colony. It is proposed either to send these "bummlers" to the House of Correction for from two to six years, or to create a new type of Colony in which they

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will be compelled to remain for a longer period.

Those who shrink from compulsion forget that though under our present system compulsion is not applied effectively, it has never ceased to be the foundation of our Poor Law. The inmate of the workhouse is *compelled* to do what is required of him. If he refuses he may be put in a cell on bread and water diet.

I have personally consulted those who are labouring among the unemployed in Manchester and London. They are unanimously of opinion that the vagrant should be compelled to work. Those who most need reclaiming slip through their fingers for want of any power of detention, and continue to prey on society. At the same time they all agree that the "loafer" forms but a small percentage of the unemployed.

*Compulsion of the loafer* would therefore disembarass the "tramp element" of its worst and most dangerous members, and is the basis of any right treatment of the problem of the unemployed. If it were realised what a centre of contagion every man and woman who *habitually* shirks the law of labour becomes, society would be

only too glad to secure the elimination of this element by wise methods of segregation. It is continually reproduced generation after generation. One tramp may be the parent of a numerous progeny, born to beg or steal. To form colonies where such members of society are separated, humanely treated, reclaimed if possible, but prevented from burdening the community by offspring, is only common sense from the point of view of the common weal.

Even if he is not economically self-supporting, the cost to the State of a man in a Labour Colony seems to be much less than in our workhouses. The successful Land Colony raises its site in value. Thus, according to Government valuation (for assessing purposes) the Colony at Rickling has raised the value of its investments from £7,200 in 1883 to £17,500 in 1891—an annual increment of £1,300. The annual subsidy being £2,010, this reduces the cost of the Colony to £710 per annum, or an annual cost of £1 11s. 6d. per man benefited. ("Report on Labour Colonies," by J. Mavor, &c., Glasgow, 1892, p. 48.) This valuation is of course speculative, but a Berlin Colony sold the greater part of the land six years



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after foundation at a large profit. (Report above quoted, p. 19 *et seq.*) If we compare this with the dead loss per annum of maintaining paupers in our workhouses it is evident that there is a large margin for economy in Poor Relief by making paupers wholly or partially support themselves. Frequently also it is not only the tramp himself, but his wife and children who have to be maintained at public expense, the "in and out" class of our workhouses being the despair of every Board of Guardians.

Therefore from the point of view of economy, expediency, and self-preservation, effective dealing with the genuine tramp is the first step to the solution of the problem of the unemployed. No spasmodic or local charitable treatment can replace a thoroughly radical national system. We have a Poor Law. To modify and adapt that Poor Law to our changed times, along the lines which have been found suitable by the experiments of other kindred nations, is absolutely imperative.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INCAPABLE

HAVING separated the comparatively small class of *confirmed loafers* for special treatment, and applied in the last resort penal compulsion to them, we pass to the consideration of the cases of those who are being manufactured into loafers by their inability to obtain permanent employment. Enquiry reveals a great mass of misery due to *real incapacity*, and yet this mass bears after all but a small proportion to the total mass of unemployment, and is capable of separate treatment. If the treatment of the "loafer" should be penal, surely the treatment of these "incapables" should be remedial. They are, sooner or later, a complete burden on the State or on charity. They are in and out of work-houses, hospitals and asylums, if not prisons.

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They are cared for by public charities ; they obtain doles public or private. Yet they are *not* cared for ; the problem of fitting each one into his place in the State is never effectively tackled. It is often impossible without a measure of compulsion. Left to themselves, they drift about as social wreckage, cast up and down by waves of prosperity or indigence. Yet they are as individuals a definitely harmful influence in the State. They recruit the ranks of prostitutes and drunkards, they burden charity, they form the "unhelpable," who often discourage those who labour among the poor. They breed and propagate an ineffective race. Not only so, but the way in which they are *forced* to prey on society for a bare livelihood brings about in themselves an unnecessary deterioration of moral character, and they become centres of contagion.

I have in my mind's eye a poor girl who was found, nearly as black as a coal, sheltering in the mouth of a sewer that was being built. She was cleansed, and taken into a Christian family. While there she gave no real trouble, and could be made useful for simple labour, but when placed in service it became

evident that she was subject occasionally to sullen, unreasoning fits of anger. No compulsion being lawful, it was impossible to induce her to remain in service when in one of these fits. She drifted away, reappeared in the workhouse, was placed in a Home ; again power was lacking to compel her to remain. She was discharged, and drifted once more ; got into the hands of the police for a foolish theft ; was discharged as a "first offender" ; shortly afterwards she reappeared in the workhouse *with a child*. She was now a hopeless problem, unclean and foul in language, a moral imbecile, so unmanageable that she was sent to Prestwich Asylum. At last she had reached the needed confinement, but alas ! shortly afterwards she was discharged *cured* (?). Her child died in the workhouse, and she was free—free to take moral contagion wherever she went, and to bear more children to be a charge to the State. When last seen she was a prostitute, violently ejected from a public-house. Probably she may cost the State several hundred pounds before her career is ended. Yet if, at the point at which it was recognised that she really belonged to the class of those *incapable* of earning an independent liveli-

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hood, it had been possible to keep her under mild restraint, doing what she could towards self-support, this career might have been avoided.

It is the experience of all Rescue workers, whether among men or women, that just the most hopeless—those who are *in need* of restraint—drift away, and sink down to become helpless burdens on the public. Yet in these we have the proper field for Christian love and charity; they are the “little ones,” the “weak brothers or sisters” of the human family, and just because they are the feeble ones, a measure of compulsion is often necessary to make them take the course that is best. Probably in every case there is a time when mild compulsion—the sort of compulsion you apply to a child to make it do what is best for it—would have checked the deterioration. I have frequently observed that if an individual of this class is *forced* to remain in the workhouse, where daily work and cleanliness are required, the effect on character is better than if, being protected by their family or by private charity, they can get out and live a free life. Unfortunately, however desirable it may be that freedom should be curtailed, an individual

of this class ranks as "able-bodied" unless absolutely imbecile, and is free to take out a discharge from the workhouse. It is of little avail to afford a temporary asylum to these microbes of social disorder, if they are free to disperse at will. They need to be separated, kept under observation, and *prevented from propagation*. Arnold White says, "The State that sanctions the marriage of invalids settles its destiny." What then can be said for the State that allows the propagation—often by immorality—of imbecility, drunkenness, and utter moral depravity? It is well known that pauper men often take their discharge *simultaneously with pauper women*, there being no legal power to refuse the most feeble-minded woman or girl, who happens to be classed among the "able-bodied," the right to discharge herself from the workhouse. The results may be imagined. Such women inevitably return to burden the community with illegitimate children, reared by the State at great cost.

It may be remarked that half the residents in German Labour Colonies are those "who are willing, or feel forced, to exchange the freedom of ordinary industry, without

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guarantee of subsistence, for the practical though mild slavery of the Colonies with guarantee of subsistence." The Colonies have been filled, "not by those who suffer from want of employment pure and simple, but by those who, besides suffering from want of employment, suffer from some moral or physical defect which renders them undesirable associates for those who have not fallen, or who are not physically incapable." "The German working man shuns the Colonies." ("Report on Unemployed," p. 288.) It is evident that if this is so they must fulfil an important social function in regard to ordinary life, weeding out the most intractable element, just that which is in the way of so many schemes for the improvement of public conditions.

All attempts in England to deal effectively with the problem of the unemployed are hampered by the presence of the "incapable." The Labour Bureaux find that "the old and physically incapable must be left severely alone." They constitute the difficulty of free registries. They are attracted to Public Relief Works. In Liverpool the Corporation found when it set men to excavating work that the labour was "about half as

efficient as that of ordinary navvies " (p. 231). Efficient labour is watered down by inefficient to an average of inefficiency.

The "Report on the Unemployed" however brings out clearly that there are two effective methods of distinguishing the "fit" from the "unfit." One is to provide "continuity of employment." This is a "searching test" (p. 236). "Many who will work for weeks together three days a week are weeded out if they are compelled to work every day." A physically incapable man might work for a short time, but *regular* work would test him, and eliminate him. He would be sifted out for special treatment.

The other means of separating the "unfit" is to provide "piece work" instead of "time work." The result at Glasgow Relief Works (1892-3) of changing the system from time work to piece work (stone-breaking at 2s. per cubic yard, and digging at 9d. per cubic yard) was "to reduce largely the number at work." It had become clear to the committee that a large number of the men employed were those whose "distress, though it might be real enough, was the result of habits which would bring poverty and suffering in any case." It is a misfortune



to the real working man to be confounded with these "incapables."

The Relief Scheme of the Mansion House Conference, 1892-3, appears to have carefully sifted out these "incapables," and a similar sifting by careful personal investigation has been practised in Canning Town during the winter. But it is evident that an enormous amount of labour and trouble has to be undergone, whenever some spasmodic effort at relief is started, *before* the true candidates are ascertained. Our various charitable agencies, and our workhouse authorities and Police Courts, may deal over and over again with the same individual, who is all the while really *incapable* of earning an independent livelihood.

If the Labour Colony were used, as in Germany, as a method of relief for the "able-bodied, homeless, non-effective man," it would form a refuge for the lowest grades of the unemployed, especially for the "men who drift," while it is "no place for the regular workman." It is stated that the Labour Colony would probably be found to be "no more expensive than the present system." It seems only right that society should put restrictions on the multiplication

of those who are economically useless. A man of this class is more likely to become an "effective" if, having already taken upon him the responsibility of marriage, he is debarred from his wife's society and made to work for her maintenance and that of his children. Often the wife has supported both him and the children, and is no worse off without him. The class of "social wreckage" ("Class B," of Charles Booth) consisting of "men who are unfit or unable to guide their lives in the competitive world," might be gradually eliminated if "sterilised." The present local charity, temporary relief, and workhouse system serve to perpetuate and increase this class. A man gets "out of work," and his family subsist by various doles. He leaves them to "seek work:" they come "on the parish." He is sought for, often ineffectively, and meanwhile his wife and children are maintained at the cost of the State. If he could be committed to a Labour Colony, the plea of worklessness would be taken away. If capable he would pass out into regular employment; if incapable, he would have to remain and do what he could to redress the wrong he had already done to Society by marrying when unable to support a family.

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The mistake of the Dutch Labour Colony ("Report on Unemployed," p. 317) at Veenhuizen appears to be that these "incapables" are allowed to rear large families. This would lead to evils similar to those produced by the virtual subsidising of indigent reproduction previous to the reform of the Poor Law.

The inmates of our workhouses classed as "able-bodied" belong very largely to these "incapables," but they are massed together, and unprovided with work, except that of the workhouse itself. They need classification and separate treatment. The Labour Colony seems to be the proper receptacle for single men who are drifting down into thorough incapables, and married men who desert their families. But a different kind of treatment is needed for other incapables. There is a large sphere for organised Christian charity, backed up by the State.

The class of "imbeciles" and "fit cases" now massed together in our workhouses calls for discrimination and careful treatment on the lines that have been so successful at Wilhelmsdorf.

The result of the "Colony of Mercy" has been to prove that epileptics can be made

largely self-supporting, and can lead bright and happy lives under Christian influence. It is a great wrong to many of these poor creatures to class them and confine them with the utterly imbecile. A slight fit, recurring at distant intervals, may incapacitate a young man or woman for earning a livelihood in the ordinary way, especially under modern conditions of use of machinery and "employer's liability." But they are quite *sane*, and are apt to drift into a condition of imbecility solely because of their surroundings, if placed with those quite deficient. They need to be kept healthfully busy, not being incapable of work between their fits. In Bristol there was a poor paralysed fellow called Lockyer, quite unable to walk, permanently sad and downcast. He was reached by means of the "Guild of Poor Things," but it was impossible to rouse him to much interest: his wife had to be breadwinner while he sat at home a helpless burden. He brooded constantly over his uselessness. After his confidence had been gained, he told his friend, "There's a word that troubles and hurts me more than anything else; it seems to me it's a worse word than even 'criminal.' Perhaps I'm all wrong, but that's

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how it seems to me, sitting here and thinking—thinking all the time. I've looked for it in the Bible, but I can't find it there, not from cover to cover. It's the word 'pauper.' I'm only a 'pauper.' There's a sting—there's something shameful about it. Yet it's not my fault being the cripple I am. It wouldn't be fair to the poor wife and children to take myself off the parish, though if I *could*—if I could *any* way earn enough to do so—God knows the joy I should have." The Guild gave him a basket-chair and a few simple tools, and a helper taught him to use them. He gained hope and interest, and became a new man. He was able to take himself off the parish, and support himself.

Such men as these may have been originally self-supporting. They may be the wounded soldiers of industry. John Burns states that 1,700 men were severely injured in building the Manchester Ship Canal. It is at any rate certain that in all dangerous trades (and all trades where machinery is employed are to a certain extent dangerous), there are accidents which lead to the maiming in some way of those who are otherwise industrially efficient. It

seems the least that should be done for them, to help them towards such a measure of self-support as yet remains possible. The neglect of this is a serious injustice to them, and in the long run, a serious burden to the community.

We may summarise the classes of "incapables" as follows :—

1. Those *physically* unfit. The blind, the lame, the deaf, the maimed evidently need special treatment. They may become effective workers. But *special* care is needed—a sheltering of the life such as would be given to a delicate plant, and *training* in the direction of greatest capacity. If the individual rises to true use, he may be ennobled by his very infirmity; if thwarted in every avenue to true life he becomes vicious. There are sad assemblies in our workhouses of men and women who have *first* fought the rough battle of life hampered by infirmity, and then gone under. They are eventually a cost to the community. Probably a far less expenditure would have made them at least partially self-supporting. If they cannot outstrip their physical infirmity by mental or moral superiority, it is far better that they should not transmit their heritage

of suffering. These are fit subjects for Training Schools *when young*, for Homes and Asylums if old and really disabled, or for effective help towards self-support.

2. Those who are intermittently unfit.

The largest class of these is the epileptics. Pastor Bodelschwingh has shown us how to treat them. There is a national movement for dealing with all the epileptics in Germany. But in England we have not *begun* to consider effectively the needs of this class. Yet surely of all classes of the "incapable," this is the one which most readily admits of proper treatment, for it is already largely a charge on the State. Our pauper asylums and imbecile wards contain many epileptics; they are socially useless and practically incurable under our present system; it would seem only wisdom to try special treatment for them on German lines. Private enterprise cannot be sufficient for more than isolated cases. A beginning has only just been made.

3. Closely allied with this is the class of the "feeble-minded."

Unfortunately these—unless so mentally feeble as to be imbecile—are now classed with the "able-bodied," and very little

restraint can be exercised over their ingress to and egress from our workhouses. They may be quite harmless, innocent, and willing to work under kind conditions. They are often capable of warm affection and glad to live a protected life. But if treated as fit to compete in the ordinary labour market they constitute a grave social danger. If placed in sheltered circumstances they are "good ;" placed in evil conditions they take the worst shade of their surroundings. I cannot speak too strongly of the harm done to society by allowing young girls of this class their complete liberty. They cannot possibly stand morally unless shielded and guarded, yet just this protection is denied them, and they inevitably fall a prey to some dissolute man or woman and drift into an evil life. They are really *incapable of self-control*, besides being so incapable of earning their livelihood in the ordinary way that a life of vice actually affords the readiest means of obtaining sustenance. If they drift into our workhouses they are often not anchored till they have one or more children to keep. The workhouse, which at best must harbour some degraded men and women, is no place for them. Yet at present we are only at the



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beginning of an attempt to provide for this class, who need a *permanent* Home other than the workhouse, where they can remain *for life*. Ordinary Homes cannot encumber themselves with those who can never be self-supporting, and State aid and State control seems necessary in their case. The mere stoppage of the *breeding* of mentally deficient children would, in the end, be a gain to the State.

It might be possible, if our workhouses were better correlated and classified, to tell off some of them as permanent Homes for those of this class who cannot be made self-supporting, free from the contamination of the degraded women who occupy our able-bodied women's wards. These are often women who are anchored by families of children partially or wholly illegitimate. I do not mean to imply that every able-bodied woman is degraded, as respectable widows with large families, or deserted wives, also of necessity find their way to the workhouse. But there are abandoned women who, having "got caught," as they call it, have two or three children whose parentage is uncertain, and who are obliged to stay in the workhouse. These are the worst possible

associates for feeble-minded girls. Even within our workhouses there is not always such complete separation between the sexes as prevents their being wronged. The talk that goes on round them is foul, and they cannot be expected to rise above their surroundings. Often, however, they are capable of a considerable amount of rough work, and could be largely self-supporting if leading a sheltered life under good conditions. If a feeble-minded girl is a danger to the community, the same must be said of a feeble-minded boy, with uncontrolled passions, capable of begetting an imbecile progeny. Such a young man often becomes violent towards those in his own home who attempt to restrain him, and yet he may not be imbecile to the point at which State control can be claimed. Effective training under efficient control at the right age might save him and the community from many evils.

4. The next class we must consider is that of the "drunkards"—not necessarily "habitual," but those who yield to "bouts" of drunkenness under conditions of temptation. Entire separation from ordinary life for a sufficient period to overcome the "drink craze," is already recognised as the

only effective treatment for such, though something may be accomplished by curtailment of the liberty of the individual to obtain drink, as is attempted by recent legislation.

5. We have now the residuum of vicious and incapable, who drift past all help. This class of social wreckage calls for separate treatment. They should not be allowed to become loafer-tramps. They need to be "committed," if found preying on society, to some Home or Colony for remedial treatment, as the residuum of our social system. Their term of commitment should be renewable if restoration is not complete. Under kind and firm management they might be made largely self-supporting. Hadleigh Farm Colony now receives ticket-of-leave men, and men sent from the workhouses and paid for by the Guardians. It must not be forgotten that this class is *already supported* by the public. If a man *cannot* or *will not* earn his living he *is* supported and fed, so long as he exists at all, by some form of State aid or private charity. What is wanted is better methods, good classification, methodical treatment, instead of spasmodic and sporadic charity. Above all we want a

national spirit of Christian love, which will regard no one as "hopeless" and "outcast," but as a fellow-being, who has a claim on the care and thought of the individual and the community, to be made the best of for Christ's sake. If these were effectively dealt with it would tend by degrees to diminish the number of the "restless element"; the dread of compulsory retirement would tend to fix them in some occupation, or the yearning for companionship and love would draw them voluntarily to some Shelter or Home. It is not desirable to apply any large measure of interference with personal liberty; much could be done by a sort of voluntary compulsion; that is, by insisting that a case that was markedly unfit for self-support should not, as now, take a discharge from the workhouse, or leave prison or asylum for perfect liberty, but that the individual should be committed to a Home or colony suitable to his or her case, and should sign an agreement to remain that would be binding at law, as an alternative to stricter confinement. This commitment might be renewable—the alternative being the same—at definite periods. Much may be done even with this class by the compul-

sion of love ; they are often perfectly willing to remain if treated kindly, and quite amenable to light discipline.

Often they dread to leave the Home that shelters them, and ask to enter another, but *private* benevolence is unable to cope with the problem, and if the workhouse and other State institutions are permanently relieved of the treatment of an individual of this class, it seems only right that some measure of State aid should be given. Delicate and separate individual treatment, like nursing an invalid child to health, can hardly be supplied by the State alone. "It is an abominable thing," says Dr. Rhodes, "that the sane and insane epileptics should be mixed as they are now." This is only one instance, out of many, of the way in which by confounding together very varying needs, without proper classification, in great State institutions, social evils are greatly aggravated. The proper sphere for Christian charity is to discriminate and help by such methods as those employed by "The Guild of Poor Things." But a measure of State aid, and in the last resort, State compulsion, is necessary for effective treatment. It is to be hoped that the formation of separate schools for deficient children will

draw attention to the need for some recognised care over the individual life, so that these should not drift down to the vagabond level.

In a Northern town where no workshop for blind women existed, enquiry elicited the fact that all but a few had "gone to Blackpool" for the season to beg! These infirm and weakly members of society must necessarily need protection and help to self-support. "Of such" as these "little ones" of society "is the Kingdom of Heaven." They need to be taken close to loving hearts, and supported by strong arms, to be nurtured if possible into manhood and womanhood. If they cannot be trained to self-control and efficiency they must be treated as "infants" in the eye of the law, protected from wrong, guarded from evil, lifted if possible into the thought of the Heavenly Father's love, till death claims them for the life that is free from Earth's limitations.

## CHAPTER III

### EFFICIENCY

THERE is yet a third point of view from which we may approach the question of the unemployed. Separating the "loafer" for special treatment, and the "unfit" also for special treatment, we have still another class which complicates the problem. Arnold White contends that we are already despised for our *physical inefficiency*. He gives the following picture from the pen of a Boer writer of the degeneracy of the British. "We know that the entire British race is rapidly decaying; your birth-rate is rapidly falling; your children are born weak, diseased, and deformed, and the major part of your population consists of females, cripples, epileptics, consumptives, cancerous people, invalids,

and lunatics of all kinds, whom you carefully nourish and preserve." Allowing for the exaggeration of an enemy, quoted by a man who wishes to make out a case for degeneracy, there are many signs that the number of "ineffectives" among us is on the increase. That is, in addition to those actually disabled from fair competition in the industrial conflict, there are numbers below the standard of thorough efficiency. If "the British army is just ten times as unhealthy as the German" ("For Efficiency," p. 135); if "four hundred and three applicants out of every thousand are rejected by the recruiting sergeant" (p. 137), this points to the existence of a larger number of ineffectives than can belong to a healthy condition of the population.

The existence of these "ineffectives" is due to various causes, which are deep-rooted in our national life. Much care will be needed wisely to eliminate them; yet, unless they are dealt with, the evil is one which increases in geometric ratio. The following words of Charles Booth need to be well weighed by all interested in social progress: "The lower down in the scale of creation the greater the fertility. The annual increase of the population proceeds mainly from the



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classes who add no strength to the nation." Sir John Gorst, speaking at the National Conference on the Unemployed (March, 1903), said: "There was no such thing in the world as a person who is 'unemployable,' and persons who had been rescued from the condition so described had become exceedingly good and trustworthy workmen. We must begin by bringing up boys and girls to be healthy, intelligent, and so instructed that they could do their work in the world, and could develop into healthy, active, industrious men and women. That was the way to begin. It was a slow remedy, but in a generation it would absolutely cure the disease." Evidently not only the loss of time due to non-employment is a drain upon the nation, but the *relative* unemployment, due to this ineffective use of time. Cases might be cited where large public loss has occurred from this cause—notably in public works, where "ineffective" men, often "ineffectively" employed, take days to do tasks that could be much more quickly and effectively done by those trained to work. At present every trade is weighted by these ineffectives. They drift to the bottom of the trade and are uncertainly employed ; but this

is not all: their presence weakens the standard of efficiency throughout, and often seriously handicaps the effective men—since they are ready for any job. No one who watches industrial life can fail to notice a deterioration of efficiency. Every householder knows that many jobs of repairing—plumbing, drain-laying, &c., &c., are done and re-done unnecessarily, because of ineffective labour.

Yet having weeded out the incapables because of really serious physical or mental defects, as objects of charity or State-aid, it ought not to be impossible to deal effectively with these ineffectives.

The great means, as stated by Sir John Gorst, is effective education. Every boy and every girl should be definitely taught from infancy the things that are needed for practical life. It is probable that with all our education our children are being really less effectively fitted for work than they were generations ago. If a child did not go to school, or learn to read, write, and cipher, he early shared the life of his elders. He began early to graduate in the practical school of life, and acquired, unless stupid, the knowledge of those about him. The girl learned, if under the care of a good

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mother, to nurse, sew, clean, and cook; the valuable acquirements of the much-regretted "old-fashioned servant." An instance is in my mind of a woman, now housekeeper in one of our foremost educational establishments, who went to service at the age of six. She did not know how to read and write, but taught herself when seventeen. By this she raised her value so as to be able to take first-class places, and a preference for educational establishments has so perfected her that she writes a letter in a literary style, though occasionally she misspells. Her memory is phenomenal. She *never* forgets the place of any article she has once seen. Of course she is exceptional; but it is a question whether, if educated on present lines, giving eleven years to school, she would ever have attained this perfection of service.

The absence of manual training in many of our schools is little short of suicidal, in view of the circumstance that we compel our working classes to send their children to school past the age when they can easily acquire manual dexterity. The real objection of Lancashire and Yorkshire operatives to the raising of the school age is not a selfish desire for the wages of their children, but

is grounded on considerations of this sort. Any one knows that it is impossible to attain skill on the piano or violin unless the hand is early trained. The delicate "twist" needed to "piece" the "ends" in a cotton mill is a matter of manual dexterity, and so are many things in other trades, and there is real danger lest the educating of our children on scholastic lines should make a large number of "ineffectives," unless the hand is most skilfully trained as well as the head. It is wrong to employ children for such long hours that you exhaust their energy, and it is also wrong to deprive them of the dexterity on which depends their daily bread. Even "half-time" is but a partial remedy for neglected early training in manual dexterity.

There is another point of view from which such an education is suicidal, which is not sufficiently considered. As the child approaches puberty there is a rising up within him of vital force to take hold of the serious aspects and functions of life. The unbalanced will and tendency to sexual emotion is best controlled by real work, not so hard as to press on the physical functioning, but sufficiently so to turn his attention from the sentimental to the practical side of life. A

working man said to me when speaking of the difficulty of controlling a class of young lads, "They need to be set to work; it will soon knock the nonsense out of them." There is real danger in carrying on education that does not exercise the muscles, even if the place of such exercise is supplied by sports. The nature rises up eagerly towards something to give interest to life, and yet is not harnessed to real work. Boys and girls walk the streets together, read sensational and gambling literature, and a lack of stability is created that in itself is "unfitness" for the real work of life.

Yet at present it is very difficult for a lad to get any kind of manual training; and even cookery and needlework—as taught—leave a girl very ignorant of many household duties. The following is the personal experience of a mother who wished her boy to learn carpentry. There was no class at his school (an Elementary Day School). She tried at the Technical School, but was told there was *no practical teaching*, but that if he had attained skill in drawing the technical principles would be taught. This, of course, was useless for a small boy. She persevered in enquiry, and found that there was a carpentry class in connection with the

evening schools. But on seeking entry for the boy she found he would have to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic (which he was already learning in the day) in order to learn carpentry! Moreover, it would have complicated his position at the day school, as, if he passed a standard at the night school it would have been a question which school, was entitled to the grant. In the course of these enquiries, however, the mother ascertained that she had a right to *demand* instruction in carpentry for her boy. Here was an opening. She proceeded to make the request, and got a promise from his head teacher that he should join a class at the neighbouring school, which possessed one. But it was found that he must be in a certain standard, and have passed a certain drawing examination! Of course he had long been able to *handle tools*, yet this was not considered a qualification till a certain scholastic standard was attained. Eventually, after about six months' further delay, a carpentry class was *created* for this boy, which was taken to another school for lessons, and he eventually justified the trouble by showing special aptitude, and earning the commendation of his teacher. But can the ordinary parent be ex-

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pected to persevere in the face of obstacles like these? Yet carpentry is the only manual subject taught at present in primary schools.

In a following chapter I shall speak of a method of meeting this difficulty of practical instruction, but it is sufficient here to draw attention to the *need* that every child should be *practically* prepared for the work of life. For the girls I should like to see some system by which they could actually be taught to do the work of a house; and also I should like to see "Motherhood" schools—perhaps in connection with a "crèche," where they might be taught how to hold and feed a baby, the preparation of infants' food, household sanitation, and simple sick-nursing. These things should not be taught in a class-room, but by lessons in the sort of house they themselves live in, to a few at a time. A morning a week spent in actual house-work would not seriously interfere with school life, but would teach much. The girls should be examined on their practical, not their theoretical knowledge. To clean a floor or grate, wash up dishes, make beds, &c., in the neatest and best way possible, should be an object of ambition; while boys should be taught how to be "handy men."

Is the fact that the Jewish immigrant is crowding our poor out of situations, partly due to the practical education of Jewish boys and girls? Whatever may be said on the subject of the "alien immigration" it certainly does not appear to be one of "ineffectives." Charley Booth points out that the Jew displaces the Englishman by his superior industry. But the possession of this quality of persevering, untiring industry is just what we should like for our own people. It is said that the Jew overcrowds: yet he is chaste in spite of it; in the midst of all the temptations of Whitechapel he is temperate. It is urged that he is unclean, and pictures are drawn of "habits of huddling together under circumstances of unmentionable filth." Yet I am assured by a nurse who visits constantly the most crowded houses, that though their homes are "muddled" they are not dirty, but will compare favourably, even in this respect, with any of their Gentile neighbours. Their fecundity seems to be largely due to superior morality and abstemious diet. It is urged that they exist on insufficient food, on which an Englishman could not live. But though the calculation of "food calorics"



for an ordinary British workman may be higher than for a Jew, it is to be questioned if the poor dweller in the East-end, with his insufficient, mismanaged diet, gets as much nutritious food as the Jew, though his diet costs more. In fact, as the author of "Famishing London" says (p. 65), "The coming of the alien has meant harder times for our own poor. The very virtues of the Eastern Jews cause this. If they were inferior to our slum inhabitants there would be little trouble. But they are not. Taking them as a whole they are the superior people. They are more sober, they are more thrifty, they work harder, they have stronger constitutions, they are banded together by the freemasonry of race and religion, and they supplant our own folk." In other words, they drive out our "ineffectives." Therefore, surely, examination into their methods of training children and dealing with the poor might furnish us with a great object lesson as to how to rear a population capable of being frugal, abstemious, and industrious, even in the midst of the temptations of city life. They are even engaged in forming small Colonies on the land in Essex.

Given qualities such as these Jews possess, our own people would never be crowded out; therefore the thing to be desired is to make our citizens equally effective, not to arbitrarily exclude the foreigner and so make room for our own ineffective workers.

But, putting on one side this racial problem, and also the question of education, which may affect the future, but cannot greatly influence the present, how are we to deal with our own "ineffectives"?

They may be classified as follows:

1. Those who are ineffective through misplacement.
2. Those who are ineffective through lack of training.
3. Those who are ineffective through misused opportunity.

1. The number of the first class—those who are ineffective through misplacement—is, I believe, so large, that to deal with them would sensibly relieve the problem. For example: a man may be a good carpenter but a poor gardener; a girl may be quite unfit for a housemaid, but would make a good kitchen-maid. As we are situated at present, the choice of a trade is often made

haphazard : a boy becomes what his father was before him ; or local circumstances, and immediate gain, lead the parents to put him to some occupation regardless of his aptitudes. But each individual has implanted in his very nature some special gift ; and this should be ascertained early, and given scope even in school life. I have experimented with over two hundred women, destitute or paupers. Enquiring into their character and history I have been led to think that wrong environment was responsible for the greater part of their misfortune. To fit the right woman into the right place often means her salvation. Girls who would drag on hopelessly and inevitably fall, can be got to earn their living in a suitably chosen place. In fact there is, as Sir John Gorst says, "no such thing as a person who is unemployable," for the most ineffective can be made to work under workhouse restrictions.

Let me give a striking case. At a certain home in Switzerland there is an imbecile brother. He cannot be taught to read, or even to talk intelligibly to strangers, yet he does contentedly a good deal of rough work on the farm, and is usually happy. Transplant the family to town life

and he would be morose, useless, and incapable: in the free, open-air life he is not only healthy but useful.

Providing a different occupation, therefore, often solves the problem even of an incapable.

Well organised Labour Bureaux seem to be the best means of providing for the ineffective by misplacement, but it is desirable to combine with these some method of placing the individual for a short time under observation.

The work of fitting men who have failed to obtain occupation into the right place to render them self-supporting, cannot be effected by merely taking names and addresses and occupations. Character is an important item. The "Report on the Unemployed" frequently mentions this. If a recommendation is not given, it is desirable to furnish such particulars as will enable employers to make enquiry as to character and suitability. But often, where there are unfavourable facts, employers will give a *trial* to a man or woman if told truthfully the facts that have hindered success, but to ascertain these it is necessary to have the individual for a short time under observation, and this is the real usefulness of the wood-

chopping which now goes on at some Labour Bureaux. It enables those in charge to sort out their men, and to some extent to ascertain their capacity and history.

In the case of girls, all agencies for Rescue Work find the necessity of placing them in situations under supervision, to ascertain their capacities, and the fitting of the right girl into the right place forms a large part of the work of such organisations as the Metropolitan Association for befriending Young Servants. (See "Report on the Unemployed," p. 123.) The Charity Organisation Society in some places leaves the finding of the work entirely to the individual, but in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Darlington, Liverpool, and Rochdale, experiments have been made in *testing* applicants. ("Report on Unemployed," p. 148.) However, with or without such tests, Labour Bureaux and Agencies such as those for finding work for discharged soldiers ("Report," p. 135) and prisoners ("Report," p. 141) serve the purpose of helping those ineffective through misplacement. But all these Agencies which exist in England are more or less local. In some cases a town will be supplied with so many that they overlap and compete with one

another ; in others there will be none. Want of co-ordination is a serious evil, in Rescue work among men and women. Some women sample every relief agency in a town, their career is a long residence in Homes. A case of this kind seldom ends satisfactorily. Similarly the same individual may try various Labour Bureaux.

In France all employment registries are licensed, and thus under Government control, and this seems most desirable, especially in view of abuses which are only too frequent in the case of female registries. (See "Report on Unemployed," p. 130.) In addition to these licensed registries France has Labour Exchanges ("Report on Unemployed," pp. 342-346) and Free Municipal Registries (pp. 347-348). The licensing of all agencies for finding employment might lead to the study of the whole question, to the elimination of harmful agencies and of those which do nothing but trade on misfortune ; it could only do good.

New Zealand is trying the experiment of a Bureau of Industries, and the Australian Colonies are also experimenting. (See "Report on Unemployed " pp. 349-355.) It does not seem as if the field can be com-

pletely covered by anything short of national action, whether municipal or otherwise. Labour is wanted in many places, but the individual finds difficulty in ascertaining exact conditions. If some large enterprise is widely known it may attract numbers of men in excess of real demand, who will burden the locality; while on the other hand smaller enterprises and farming operations may actually lack hands.

At any rate a registration of agencies would enable us to perfect a better system by degrees, and afford ground for examining into deficiencies and gaps in our present unorganised methods.

2. But again: we have those who are ineffective through lack of training. The experiment of placing untrained men on the land was tried by the Dutch Labour Colonies. (See "Royal Commission on Labour," p. 393.)

"Awkward men with town habits unsuitable for agricultural work" were sent. The experiment did not succeed. If instead of migrating men of this class with their families, the men had been sent to an agricultural Colony and gradually trained into fitness, the result might have been different.

Colonel Lamb, questioned on this point, says: "Put the waste man on the waste land, give him a spade and let him dig, he cannot hurt it or himself. If you put him straight to any farming operation, however simple, he will do damage, and cost you money; put on the land he will pay for himself, not at once, but by the after-productiveness of the land." This is what is being done in Germany, where at Wilhelmsdorf the "Senne," a tract of land rendered unproductive by a stratum of ochreous deposit, is being dug up by "submerged" men, with the result that both it and they are rendered fruitful. Colonel Lamb says: "When your man has got accustomed to the soil, and become more handy, you can then trust him for market-gardening; he will gradually become more capable."

This is the *training* of the incapable, and it might be accomplished in other pursuits besides agriculture. Sewing is successfully taught in Salvation Army and other Homes to girls who at first can hardly hold a needle, and they become very fond of such an acquired occupation. In fact an "incapable" who is not so for lack of ability, but, for lack of training, can be rapidly



improved if willing to learn, and may become thoroughly useful to society. During the Lancashire cotton famine operatives became effective out-door labourers in connection with the Cotton Famine Relief Works. "Many of these men learned new occupations, and while doing so, by labouring in the open air, found they rapidly improved in health and gained bodily strength." Some "preferred their new form of occupation." ("Report on Unemployed, p. 404.")

The Report on foreign Colonies does not give much information as to the training of "ineffectives" into "effectives." Pastor Cronmeyer proposes that those who have been imprisoned twice or oftener, or sent more than once to a Labour Colony, should be sent to a new type of Colony called an Improvement Colony (p. 299). At Willemsoord in Holland the *children* of this class of colonists are taught to be effective (p. 314).

Reckheim in Belgium forms an agricultural school for indigent boys. In England a training farm exists at Langley, Essex, and a somewhat similar experiment is being tried at Strathwaite, Cumberland. Langley also emigrates to Canada those who are trained.

3. There remain those who are ineffective through misused opportunity. Some of these would not cast away their chance, if given a second one. Thus many of the "failures" among the educated class who drift into Labour Colonies or Homes, are found to be among the most successful cases. They value the opportunity for retrieving their past. Probably also there would be a certain hardening of public opinion, if there was good and sufficient provision for the sorting out of the really vicious and the physically incapable. A further method of selection will be discussed in the following chapter.

Having now mentioned the various theoretical methods for dealing with the lower elements of the unemployed, before passing on to the treatment of the genuine, capable, unemployed man, it may be well to state a difficulty which meets every one who labours for the relief of distress, and to throw out some suggestions as to the way in which it might be met.

This is, the difficulty as to the *identification of the individual*.

John Smith may be helped repeatedly by various individuals who are unknown to each other, and having exhausted their

charity he may disappear, and repeat the experiment in another locality.

In Germany a man can be easily identified. Any town or village where he has been at work will have registered him, and his doings for the time being. A man can be traced; and after two or three weeks the Labour Colonies usually surprise their inmates by knowing all about them. The system by which vagrants are passed on from station to station and identified will be discussed later. This "paternal government" might not meet with the approbation of "free-born Britons." Yet something approaching this is really necessary, for many reasons. One is, that the present vague notions on social subjects would give place to definite knowledge if the State identified her own children. In every enquiry into social problems we are met by vague statements. Charles Booth's patient and systematic work only reveals the need for accurate knowledge. Even on the "unemployed" question, only vague approximations meet us; no one knows accurately the extent of the problem.

Then also much overlapping of charity and a great deal of public expense would be saved. At present nearly every union

employs a removal officer, whose time is largely taken up by establishing the fact that "John Smith" is not entitled to be a member of his particular Union, but of some other workhouse far away. Correspondence passes; often expensive railway journeys are undertaken, in order that "John Smith" may be fathered on his native Union. Meanwhile the other Union may be trying to settle "Mary Brown" on the workhouse where "John Smith" is temporarily housed, and journeys and correspondence follow. In the end "John Smith" and "Mary Brown" are exchanged! The whole expense is practically waste. If it were required that a man when applying for parish relief should establish his identity, much trouble would be saved.

The individual becomes known to the State, and his actions are registered as follows: His birth, vaccination or exemption therefrom, school standards and attendance, marriage, electorship, relief if given, convictions in the Police Court, death. But though each of these is *recorded*, there is nothing to *identify*, and serve as a guarantee that he has at any rate kept out of the Police Court or off the parish,

which would in itself serve as a certificate of working ability.

The following proposal is an attempt to meet the difficulty of combining perfect freedom with some measure of identification.

When the child is born and registered, a certificate should be handed to the parent, strong enough to bear long use, and with ample space for the appropriate entries. This should state the parents' parish claim. Vaccination (or exemption) should next be entered, and officially guaranteed. This certificate should be produced on entering school, and each standard and yearly attendances entered. It would thus form a certificate for a master when a boy or girl seeks work. Spaces might be left for the voluntary entry of employment, but the only State entries would be those where the individual touched the State. Thus marriage would be entered, and the certificate would have to be forthcoming on application for parish relief, the fact of relief being given would be entered, also any other instance in which a man came in contact with the State. It would be a matter of pride to keep the certificate clear. It might be required that an applicant for parish relief

should establish his residential right, as in Germany, so that on change of residence from one town to another, the placing of the name on the parish register of the town would become an ordinary act. At any rate the fact that a man became an elector would be registered on his certificate, and if a system of numbering were adopted, it would be less easy to confuse individuals of the same name.

I believe that these certificates would, by degrees, be much valued. A really honest man values anything that testifies to character, and parents value records of their children's progress. It would be possible to identify a man by writing to his birth-parish, and to recover a good deal of his history. It is touching to see the curious methods the poor take for establishing their respectability. A woman brought me the certificates of *three marriages* as a proof that she was a respectable woman entitled to a free dinner!

If a man was identified, his systematic treatment by the State or charity would be much simplified.

In Germany, when an intending colonist arrives at the Colony, the first thing to be

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done is to demand his papers; any one without visible means of support runs the risk of being locked up as a vagabond if without these. These papers are retained by the director of the Colony, giving him a hold on the man, and also telling him a good deal about him. Time is saved that would otherwise be spent in enquiry, and also much social evil is obviated. Men who desert wives and children cannot pass as unmarried. It is often impossible for our Guardians to find them in England, and they are free to leave their families as a burden on the public, perhaps to marry again in some other town, and repeat the process which they have found so easy. A large floating population of unattached men who are not young forms a grave social danger, and it appears to be on the increase. The impossibility of identification of the individual directly facilitates much evil, and it is greatly to be feared that the number of "separation orders" also ministers to this: it becomes the interest of a man to disappear if ordered in court to pay a weekly sum, and the facilities for such disappearance are so great as to form an actual temptation.

## CHAPTER IV

### WASTE LABOUR

THE necessity of breaking up the problem of the unemployed into its elements is recognised in the Board of Trade "Report on the Unemployed," but no clear distinction is made between the "inefficient" for lack of training and the "incapable" from physical and other defects. In the New Zealand Report on the "Bureau of Industries," the threefold distinction of "criminally lazy," "helpless," and "helpable," is recognised. A similar classification has arisen in the Dutch Labour Colonies, Merxplas taking the "able-bodied" vagrants as a penal Colony, Hoogstraeten the infirm, classified very similarly to my own subdivisions, and Wortel the "helpable." The differentiation of Colonies is proceeding in Germany, and is advised by experts.



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But if we provide in the most perfect way for all these we are still not yet face to face with the heart of the problem, for all that has previously been said supposes that either by means of changed employment, charity, or State support, *employment can be had* for those who are either incapable or ineffective, and some remedial treatment applied to them.

But if we deplore the "waste" of the vicious, incapable, or "ineffective," what shall we say to the waste of actual workers, the "soldiers of industry"? If we allow the prodigal to learn his folly by actual experience of hard labour and hunger, if we provide "inns" for those who are robbed and wounded, and left by the wayside of life, what shall we say to those who stand idle in the market-place, because no man has hired them? "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." But suppose the places are all taken? Is the "effective" worker to become "ineffective" through disuse?

There is one commodity which is more precious than any other in the world. It is Time. Like an ever-flowing stream no one can stop it, it is God's gift to men, and to the whole creation. But, like other gifts, it is given to be used. Watch any creature in

its use of time, the restless energy of a child, the busy industry of a bee, the constant coming and going of a thousand forms of life. In quieter organisms time is used for growth, a busy unseen life of assimilation building up the cell-tissue. If we climb from the lowliest to the highest, work is still a life phenomenon. Christ said : " My Father has gone on working to the present moment. I go on working too." Idleness therefore breaks the law of the universe, but it also allows the most precious commodity in the world to run to waste. The daily waste is amazing : we will now attempt to characterise and estimate it. We boast that an Englishman's work is worth more than that of any other nationality, yet every day we let the time of thousands of workers run to waste. England might be the wonder of the world if her waste labour were utilised.

Part of this waste is due to fluctuations in supply and demand, and these may be summarised as follows :—

1. Fluctuations due to change of season.
2. Yearly fluctuations dependent on seasonal changes abroad.
3. Fluctuations due to business changes, such as wool sales, &c.

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4. " Cyclical " fluctuations, *i.e.*, recurring after periods of years.
5. Fluctuations due to " fashion."
6. Local fluctuations due to shifting of industry.
7. Changes due to manufacturing (changes in processes).
8. Extraordinary changes, *e.g.*, the American Civil War, which caused the cotton famine.

The presence of unemployed due to these causes, and the gauging of the extent of this *real* unemployed problem, is at present masked by their being mixed up with the incapable and inefficient. The Labour Bureaux find that "the old and physically unfit must be left severely alone." When the unfit and inefficient are weeded out for special treatment we shall find ourselves face to face with the genuine working man out of employment, and this will be to his benefit and ours. Many doubt his existence, because of the extent to which the problem is masked by the presence of the "unfit" element. But during the past winter it has been brought home to many by the difficulty of finding employment for returned soldiers. Hundreds of men in Bristol, London, and other

towns vainly sought employment, and the very success of agencies for placing soldiers, meant in many cases the displacement of others.

It must be remembered that labour is a "commodity," but there is a difference between it and any other commodity. If an article of commerce is over-supplied the production of it is soon stopped. But after the demand for a certain sort of labour has stopped, the man is still there to be utilised. The ideal state of labour would be, for its fluidity to be such that each displaced individual would at once find another place. But this is not the case at present, many things hamper the fluidity of labour, and therefore from many causes a man may be temporarily unemployed.

Let us try to estimate our waste-labour power.

An interesting analysis is given in "The Problem of the Unemployed," by John Hobson (Methuen & Co.), which may be summarised as follows:—

I. Waste labour of men who are not "unemployed."

(a) Those who work four or five days, and "play" the rest of the week.

In some trades in periods of depression this lasts for months.

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(b) Intermittent labour, as *e.g.* masons.

(c) Winter slackness, *e.g.* bricklayers.

II. Waste labour due to trade depression.

(a) Members of trades who have become economically superfluous.

(b) Those who, being below the standard of efficiency, get intermittent employment.

Mr. Charles Booth remarks that the modern system of employment will not work without reserve of labour.

Singling out from these categories those *economically superfluous*, we may make a rough analysis of them as follows:—

I. The official figure, 1901, for all trades for which returns were received gives 3·8 per cent. as unemployed. This must be increased considerably because, the figures being based on those who receive out of work pay, there will be at any given date:—

(a) Those who have not begun to receive out of work pay.

(b) Those not yet qualified for it.

(c) Those who have exhausted their pay, and pass off the list.

(d) Men past middle age counted as superannuated or sick.

At the end of 1901 the total membership of all Trade Unions known to the Govern-

ment was 1,922,780, of whom 10,801 were members of branches outside the United Kingdom. It will be seen that this is only a fraction of the great army of labour, and for several reasons it is a body of picked men, and therefore less likely to afford a large percentage of unemployed.

II. Passing to the unorganised trades, we have a larger amount of unemployment. Two causes of unemployment may be specified.

(a) Manufacture of unnecessaries subject to freaks of fashion.

(b) A continual glut of unskilled labour, which constitutes a sediment at the bottom of the ladder of labour, work-people deposited who are dislodged from former occupations, and fed by the unskilled labour of the children they breed. Charles Booth estimates this "Class B" at 317,000 in London alone.

III. We have next what cannot be called "unemployment," but nevertheless comes under the head of "economically superfluous" employment.

John Hobson asserts that there are only 4,000,000 engaged in manufacture to 13,000,000 wage-earners. Clerks, messengers, warehousemen, porters, &c., furnish a large contingent to the statistics of the

unemployed. Thus in the Board of Trade Statistics of Labour Bureaux for 1900-1901 under the two heads of "clerks and warehousemen" and "porters and messengers," we have an average of 92 applicants per month, while if we add "carmen, stablemen, horsemen," we have 148 applicants, which closely approaches the figure of 177 labourers per month. All these are economically unproductive, being engaged in the business of handling or carrying what others produce.

Evidently the multiplication and division, among several men, of what can be effectively done by one, causes economic waste. The arrest of this waste through middlemen is largely the cause of the successful dividends of the Co-operative Societies.

The consumer pays to every hand through which goods reach him. The multiplication of little shops is equivalent to a tax on the goods they supply. A great deal of waste labour is also spent on advertising and pushing goods. The majority of those employed in advertising are economically superfluous.

IV. The unemployment of men who are only required in emergencies. Charles Booth estimates (vol. IX., p. 140, abstract of contents) that 22,000 "dockers" compete

for the work of 20,000 men. During May, 1903, the number of dock and wharf labourers employed varied from 15,021 to 11,912, the corresponding figures for May, 1902, being 15,568 and 13,314. The highest number reached in a series of months from January, 1897, to December, 1901, appears to have been 18,564 in November, 1900. There are thus great fluctuations. Tom Mann regards this ("Royal Commission on Labour," p. 151) not as "superfluous labour," since under present conditions all are required when employment on the docks is at its maximum, but he believes that lack of proper arrangements is largely responsible for the overplus, and that better locations of wharves, and central authority, might dovetail the need to a great extent. He says (p. 155), "I believe that if the whole of the trade of the port was controlled by one authority which desired to steady the trade, then the dockers, the waterside workers, the whole of them, could be practically permanently employed." If this were the case, evidently the surplus would be set free for other employment, and it is therefore "waste labour."

V. The unemployment of discharged soldiers. It has been brought home to us



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lately that the discharge of men in the prime of life, who cannot readily be absorbed into the industrial population, is a fruitful source of "waste."

VI. The unemployment of overstocked professions. Many who are crowded out of these, actually drift to Rescue Shelters and Labour Colonies, being unable to compete in the unskilled labour market. Yet on the testimony of Colonel Lamb of Hadleigh they are willing to learn, and furnish in the end some of the best colonists.

VII. The upper class of unemployed. These, though often socially useful, are not necessarily so, and are an economic burden on the nation. In 1901 135,052 males between 20 and 65 are returned as of "no occupation."

VIII. Waste pauper labour. 120,285 are given as "male paupers" in 1901, but this includes 32,397 under 15 or over 75, leaving 87,888 as the approximate number of "unemployed."

IX. Unemployed women. John Hobson takes no account of the unemployment of women except in a few Labour Bureaux statistics. In the Government Labour Bureaux statistics the mean number of women who made application per month in

1900-1901 was 148 as against 468 men, or about one-third.

Home work, service, or charing is usually available for a woman, but in seasons of commercial depression the market becomes overstocked, and the lower ranks cannot obtain employment. There is also the same waste from "slack time" or actual unemployment in women's labour as in men's. For example, large numbers of weavers have been unemployed or working only four days a week during the "cotton corner."

There is also another element of unemployment for women often overlooked. After a woman has reared children her life may become one of comparative leisure. The Scottish Wholesale Co-operative Society has abolished the "sweating system" in shirt-making by employing as "finishers" old women and widows, who are allowed to come to the factory at the hours that suit them, and thus all the work is done at the factory, and employment found for their "spare time." ("Royal Commission on Labour," p. 44.)

Many complaints are made as to increase of drunkenness among women, but it is scarcely recognised to what extent the fact that bread-baking, confectionery, and

ready-made clothing have taken away home occupation, may lead to an increase of time spent in "gossiping." Many women weavers in our northern towns greatly prefer to return to the factory when child-bearing is over, because the home-life seems so cramped and dull. A measure of occupation combined with home life would seem to be better than all factory, or all home, with leisure often badly employed.

Under these nine heads it will be seen that there is a great volume of "economically superfluous" labour, to which may be added the unemployment of those who lose work partially through sickness or slack time. For example, in the engineering trade in 1895 (the latest year for which statistics are given in the "Labour Statistics of the United Kingdom," 1900-1901) the aggregate number of working days lost through want of employment is given as 116,777, or 16.1 per member.

There is also a new element of unemployment through the pressure of the Employers' Liability Act, which leads to the rejection of those past middle age, but in many ways even more fit to be self-supporting than the younger lads. It is very probable that the total volume of unemployment is on the

increase from several causes. John Hobson enumerates several of these as follows:—

1. The expansion of market areas, making trade uncertain.

2. The increase of speculation. "Corners" and "rings" have become a marked feature in commercial life.

3. More rapid fluctuations of fashion.

4. Excess of fluidity of trade over fluidity of labour; *e.g.* trade is said to be forsaking London for other ports, but labour is left stranded through lack of fluidity.

5. Specialisation of labour leaves the workman who has been educated in minute detail stranded on the general market if displaced.

The plea is often raised that the character of the workman leads to his unemployment, but John Hobson points out that character settles *who* shall be unemployed, the incapable man being first displaced, but the mass of unemployment is due to other causes.

There are great tidal movements of trade, as is shown by the Board of Trade returns. "Unemployed" benefit fluctuates from £460,484 in 1893 to £190,439 in 1899, creeping up to 325,866 in 1901. Returns of the percentage of unemployed over a long period of years show plainly that there are,

as it were, tidal waves of progressive unemployment, corresponding to trade depression.

This analysis of unemployment reveals a great number of contributory causes, and the statistics of Labour Bureaux also give us an insight into the many contributory rills which go to form a social quagmire. These are tabulated in the official Labour Statistics of the United Kingdom dealing with Labour Bureaux at London, Ipswich, Glasgow, Liverpool and Plymouth, as follows :—

*Men.*

Building trades, labourers.  
Engineering and metal trades.  
Printing and bookbinding trades.  
Woodworking and furniture trades.  
Carmen, stablemen, horsemen, &c.  
Porters and messengers.  
Factory operatives.  
General labourers.  
Other occupations.

*Women and Girls.*

Servants.  
Charwomen, daily work, &c.  
Laundresses.  
Other occupations.

It must be noted that the larger part of this industrial waste is of those who are *trying* or *have tried* to earn their living by some occupation. In many cases, however,

the cause of their being out of work may be unfitness. It would be an immense boon to the real workers if the army of the unfit could be dealt with separately. But unfitness may not be absolute. It may not be unfitness to earn a living, but simply unfitness to earn it in the particular path of life in which the lot is cast. A cripple for instance may be a good cobbler or tailor, though unfit for active service. Many never get the chance to be what they could be, owing to circumstances over which they have personally no control.

The value of the Labour Bureau for sorting out the capable from the incapable, if combined with some method by which individual merit can be ascertained, has already been mentioned. In addition to this an organised system of Labour Bureaux would be a means of increasing the fluidity of labour, and enabling it to flow to the right spot. At present, a few isolated Bureaux are apt to attract the residuum, and it is of great importance that these "floating" cases should be adequately dealt with, and not simply discarded by one Labour Bureau only to pass on to another, to be finally rejected by all. This seriously hampers the

problem. Nevertheless the success and increase of such as exist is a proof of the need.

The formation of a Government Department of Labour and of a Clearing Centre (see "Royal Commission on Labour," pp. 421 and 430) is recommended by many practical men. This is described by Sir John Gorst (Conference on Unemployed, March, 1903) as a "palliative." He says: "Labour Bureaux should be in every centre, and in connection with them there should be some sort of 'clearing house,' so that labour could be distributed." But it is evident that Labour Bureaux alone would not solve the problem. They merely facilitate employment and shorten the period when a man is seeking work. Under wise management they fit in social units to their right place, and afford a means for adequate sorting of the mass of unemployment.

It must be remembered that numbers seek work who never enter a charitable institution. Of those who seek employment by means of Labour Bureaux many are quite capable of full employment, but may be unable to obtain it for want of character or clothes. I watched forty-five men who were personally interviewed in Manchester as applicants for

bed, supper, and breakfast. Quite half of them appeared to be up to the usual standard working man as regards physique and apparent ability, and the superintendent reported "very few lazy," yet all were submerged.

Mr. Cox, who superintended the relief given in the winter (1902-3) at Canning Town, reports that the greater number of cases were *able-bodied* labourers, and states that they have crowded into London off the land owing to agricultural changes in Essex. Miss Cheetham, of Canning Town Women's Settlement, states that very few of the wives and mothers are "London-born." The unemployed in this district, whose sufferings caused public attention to be directed to them in the winter, consist therefore largely of those who are capable of forming "the backbone of labour." Though the public processions were doubtless largely recruited by the genuine tramp, numbers of men were quietly starving, and losing efficiency in the process.

Members of the following trades are "picked up" by the Salvation Army Elevators: Carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, bedmakers, musical instrument makers,



machinists, plumbers, bricklayers, painters and decorators, packing case makers, and labourers. These willingly sign an agreement to work on the terms offered.

It is therefore abundantly demonstrated that outside the ranks of the tramp, the incapable and the inefficient, there exists at all times a body of men willing and able to earn a livelihood and never completely absorbed into industrial life, though fluctuating in numbers in times of good and bad trade; and that in addition to these there exist a number of people imperfectly employed, or employed to an extent which greatly fluctuates, and also a great number of people who are employed in occupations economically superfluous, or not employed at all, the whole constituting a volume of waste labour which is a serious drain on our national resources, since every individual, whether fully employed or not, obtains food and clothes and lodging at the expense of the economically useful.

How shall we minimise this volume of waste labour? Is it really economically superfluous, or due to maladministration of national resources?

## CHAPTER V

### THE LABOUR MARKET

WE are at last face to face with the heart of the question, namely, the existence, probably at all times, of a body of individuals who are at present economically superfluous, who increase in numbers, sometimes to an alarming extent, in periods of bad trade, who hang on the fringe of labour, and alter its conditions by underbidding their fellows. If we deal effectively with the incapable and ineffective, making them partially or wholly self-supporting, we are met by the cry that we only increase the difficulty. The real heart of the question is that there is not work enough for everybody.

If the surplus of the labour market were merely a surplus of machines to be laid by till wanted, the fluctuations would only mean that so much capital lay idle. But when each "hand" cast on one side is a living,

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sentient human being, perhaps having others dependent upon him, it becomes our bounden duty to ask if we have arrived at such finality in social questions that no remedy is possible.

Perhaps light may be gained on the subject by the use of an illustration. Man has constantly had to claim victory over conditions which were inimical to his life ; his whole history is a career of conquest. Surely it would be strange if in an age when the evidences of victory are on every hand, when combination and co-operation for large ends has become possible as never before, we were to sit down and content ourselves with social conditions which are evidently undermining our national prosperity. If, as some think, we are being outdistanced in production by other nations, it is evident that our unemployed question is likely to grow more acute ; it is well therefore that we should find a remedy while it is comparatively small.

Let us take the analogy of *water*, to represent this crowd of restless humanity that ebbs and flows in our streets. Each drop is harmless. Yet left to itself water may become an agent of destruction. It sweeps away landmarks, it accumulates into

marshes, it rolls in mighty floods. Tamed and harnessed to the service of man it performs wonders, and becomes a great factor in industrial progress. But it may also be fatal to man's most cherished achievements if uncontrolled.

Now consider how close is the analogy. John Hobson speaks of the "permanent *pool* of over-supply of low-skilled labour *fed* by periodic trade depression." But *pools* may be drained. The Rev. W. Tozer in his evidence before the Royal Commission (p. 428) stated that he could not get enough bricklayers and carpenters to supply the demand, "they were not to be had for money." Recently the farmers in Westmoreland have been calling out for labourers, whom they were unable to obtain. Evidently therefore the *pool* that exists in one place might be drained if supplied to another. But it will be noted that though "the fluidity of labour" has become a common expression, there are conditions which interfere seriously to prevent a speedy adjustment. The "stream" is sluggish, and does not flow with sufficient rapidity into the requisite channels, but distributes itself as water does in marsh-land. Other conditions are necessary also, such as

means of conversion from one trade to another And in some cases men must needs accumulate awhile, pending fresh use. Is it not possible that this should take place in an organised way, fruitful instead of harmful to society?

Need we ever say "the floods are out"? History teaches that if distress passes a certain point, the whole organisation of society is in danger. Nothing is so utterly uncontrollable as floods of starving men. They have behind them a sentiment in the breast of man himself, and however the sudden flood may temporarily subside, in the long run it avails to cause the removal of those human ills or inhuman conditions against which it is directed.

Is it impossible to make Labour Reservoirs?

Since the possibility of a different state of things is sometimes brought home to the mind better by parable, and by the sketch of an ideal, than by argument, I will give the rein to my imagination and picture the removal of the ills from which we are suffering.

#### THE LABOUR MARKET.

A certain town was situated on a high hill, and there was often great scarcity of

water, yet the rainfall in that country was considerable. Every summer you could see the numbers of people spending long hours in going to seek water. They wore out their boots with tramping long distances and often they came back hot and thirsty, not having found any at all. They waited about with baths and vessels of all sorts to catch any chance shower. They grumbled at God who had not given them rain, and at those who had water but did not let them share.

At last one day a man arose and said, "My brothers, we are fools. Have you not noticed that what rain-water we possess is caught on the house-roofs, which are bigger than your pots and pans? If we had a very big pan we could catch water enough for all."

They said to him, "How can we make a pan big enough?"

He said to them: "Listen! I have heard that in other countries they have big pans on the hillsides which they call 'reservoirs.' Let us make one to catch the water all the year round."

And it seemed good to the men of the town, so they built a reservoir, which held the water, and they had enough and to spare.

There is just as great need without supply

in our towns to-day. We talk of "supply and demand," and we say it governs everything; but certain methods make a great difference in the regulation of supply and demand. There has been electricity enough in the water-power of Niagara to turn a thousand mills ever since Niagara was, but it has only recently been utilised. A force greater than Niagara is running to waste in our towns. Idleness breaks the law of the universe; it allows the most precious commodity in the world to run to waste. Not only so, but the world needs the workers, just as much as a thirsty town needs water. There is work and to spare going a-begging. There is no one that has not in his house or surroundings work that wants doing. Odd jobs of mending and repairing, beautifying of house and home, making of articles useful or necessary, work enough that wants doing on every side! Look from a railway train at the slovenly roofs with slates out of repair! It is but a glimpse of countless inside needs. Over and above these individual needs are many needs of the community. What is necessary to make our towns beautiful, to level old buildings, plant trees, to open up thoroughfares? Everything that has been

made has been made by *labour*; the whole of our cities and our material civilisation would vanish if the labour of the manual worker vanished. When I look at mighty piles of buildings, at wide streets, at railroads, tunnels, embankments, and reflect that all are due to the tiny human ant—the day-labourer—I am amazed; and when I see numbers of such men as built the Houses of Parliament, dug the Thames tunnel, laid the Victoria Embankment, standing idle in the market-place, I am astonished at the waste that is going on daily. With all our wisdom we are a nation of fools.

There is no saleable commodity so inefficiently organised as is labour. If I want flour or sugar I know where to go for them. If I want a man to whitewash my ceiling I go to a master-whitewasher. He tells me he may be able to spare me one *in a fortnight*: yet a whitewasher may at that very moment be standing idle in the market-place.

Not long ago a woman came to my house with a child three months old. Her husband had been seeking work eleven weeks. He could quarry, use pick and spade, do any labourer's work, or carding in a mill. He was willing and eager to work. The gardener



under whom he was eventually employed, described him as "the willingest man he had ever known." He has never lost work since. Yet he had tramped miles in search of work. Hope deferred was eating his heart out. All his furniture had gone to get bread. He had only his working clothes. He and his wife were starving. Yet at the same moment a contractor had the utmost difficulty to meet with men to level some houses and make improvements in a park. The work was delayed for want of labour such as this man would have eagerly given.

Here were unorganised supply and demand. There was no reservoir. Now let us examine a better state of things with regard to some article of commerce, remembering that labour may be regarded as a commodity no less than any other article.

Imagine yourself looking into a cutler's shop, full of scissors, knives, and other tools. Here is supply, and if you want an article you can go and buy it, supposing you have money in your pocket. You may need every article you see ; there may be a real demand for all in your mind ; and yet you may be unable to touch the supply for want of money.

But a different state of things might conceivably exist. Suppose there was no cutler's shop, but that the articles lying in that shop window were instead lying for sale in as many different houses. Suppose next you really wanted a good many of them, and were willing and able to buy them. There would then be demand in your mind, and a corresponding supply would exist. Every article might be ready for sale, and there might be an effectual demand. Yet the supply would not be available for want of organisation. *The shop acts as a reservoir.*

This state of things, *i.e.*, unorganised supply and demand, has existed, and still does exist in many countries. Where barter is the only method of supply, men have to seek customers for the individual articles they make. Occasional markets held periodically become the first form of organisation of supply and demand. Shops are a later development.

The same state of things existed with regard to money as a commodity before banks were invented. My neighbour might possess buried treasure, and I might need a loan; but reserves of money are, in the

East, "hid in a field," for want of a trustworthy reservoir. *Banks are reservoirs for money.*

Surely what the wit of man has brought about with regard to ordinary commodities, and with regard to money viewed as a commodity, could be accomplished with regard to labour similarly viewed, so that the most precious material thing in the world—the time of an able-bodied man—should not run to waste.

The problem is *how to construct Labour Reservoirs.*

Notice here, that though the whole of what is going to waste may be called "time" or "labour," it is really a very varied commodity that is wasted. Take the contents of a jeweller's shop, and throw them into the sea: clocks, watches, rings, a thousand articles fit for use or beauty. What waste! Yet not so much waste as goes on daily in our streets. Each man who stands idle in the market-place represents so much varied work that might have been healthfully done, and was not. Carpenters, joiners, bricklayers, gardeners, weavers, farm labourers—a thousand and one trades are represented. If the possible results of waste labour could

be tabulated men would be astonished. How many tons of water run to waste in a single stream before a reservoir is constructed? Probably there is not a working man in England who has not "played him" some time or other for want of work. The evil is increasing, as the multiplication of employments makes it more difficult to find out where the demand and where the supply are located. The necessity put upon a labouring man to seek a market for his labour, and the uncertainty of finding one at all, add a terrible anxiety to the life of working men, and give unique advantages to the buyer of labour.

*What is wanted is a Labour Market.*

We speak of the Labour Market as if it already existed. What does exist is unorganised supply and demand, and this cannot in any sense be called a "market." In old times the beginnings of organisation did exist. Men who stood in the market-place were supposed to be there to sell their labour; an employer could go there to hire them, and as none was a stranger to the others, in small towns and villages each man's trade would also be known. Now the silent crowds that stand in our squares are unknown to the passer-by; they have no

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cohesion, and no sign of trade, and it would not be much help for either master or man to meet in the market-place.

Yet there are men wanting work, and the work is waiting to be done. Many of the men can truthfully say: "We are idle because no man has hired us." And just as most other commodities spoil for want of use, so does labour spoil. A tool left long in a shop window rusts; a man who walks the streets day after day—the iron enters his soul. If he does not fall a prey to drink or gambling, or other mischiefs that lie in wait for idle hours, the bitter experience eats into his heart, and perhaps starts the habit of idling. The young especially are likely to become castaways. At first their ability is impaired, then they become quite useless, and finally they prey upon society. The confirmed willing loafer is an enemy to his kind, and ought to be reformed or eliminated; but this would only be possible if the organisation of labour left no man an excuse for idleness. These facts may all be admitted, and still where is the remedy?

*Co-operation and common sense can build a Labour Reservoir.*

Working men can co-operate for supply of

other commodities, can create savings banks—money reservoirs. Is it possible to create Labour Reservoirs by co-operation?

Notice that, though every man has his own particular trade, there are a good many things besides that it is useful for a man to know, and for him to be able to do, and also that he might like to learn if he had but the chance. It could not do any man harm to know the rudiments of several trades; it would help to make him a “handy man”—a better husband, father, breadwinner, and citizen—to know how to carpenter, build, bake, garden, carve wood or stone, repair or make his clothes, manage animals, milk, dig, &c. Many lads in better circumstances of their own accord learn some of these things, and it is always useful for a husband and father to know how to look after his house and garden.

Notice also that work in itself is, if not in excess and of an uncongenial sort, a positive boon. Though I may never get a penny for my work, I still get experience. I get power to do the same things better; in many cases I get the thing made as a possession in fact or in memory. A child earns no wages, but his self-made kite or boat is a never-to-be-

forgotten possession. The joy of making things is a real joy, even apart from possession. Very few men are privileged to possess the fruit of their labours, but it is a possession to have had the privilege to work—the mere sense of having done something useful. Mr. Broadhurst, M.P., helped as a stonemason to build the House of Commons. Probably this fact was to him a most valuable possession. It was one to which he was proud to allude. Many a man who spends his hours idly would be only too glad to employ them, if he knew how and where to do so beneficially. Why not at the Labour Market?

Perhaps I can best express my meaning in the form of a dream, leaving it for others to dream better than I, and to adapt their dream to action.

I see then in my mind's eye a large building, surrounded by ample gardens in the immediate neighbourhood of a large town. I ask an elderly man the name of the building, which is surrounded by statues, and beautifully decorated within and without. He replies: "Do you not know? This is our Labour Market."

"Labour Market! What do you mean?"  
I reply.

"Come and see," he says.

I enter a large hall fitted up on every side with what appear to be shops but are really workshops. Here you may find nearly every sort of artisan at work—carpenters, plumbers, &c. The power, the tools, and the raw materials are supplied on co-operative principles. Each workman, as long as he is in full work, pays a small contribution to the Institution.

When out of work he may come here and work at any of the trades he knows. What he makes is his own, if he repays the cost of the materials and power used, and a percentage on maintenance of the Market; and he may himself get a customer for it if he can at market prices. Every department being open, masters can enter and pick a man out of them after watching him at work. The Labour Market also comprises a Bureau where on the one side all vacancies in every kind of trade and all forthcoming demands for labour, and on the other side the names and addresses of members of the trades known to be out of work are classified and registered. Consequently an unemployed man coming in can easily learn where there is a demand for his special sort of labour.



In the grounds outside many are at work on outside employments—digging, gardening, &c. A man may apply for a plot of land, and is entitled to a proportion of the produce according to the labour expended on it. This part of the Labour Market is worked on the common cultivation system, after inquiries made in countries where it is still in force. The Labour Market also possesses considerable tracts of land further in the country, but within easy reach by free telephone and electric car, where the same sort of work is going on. It has also undertaken to effect public improvements, such as removing old buildings, levelling, or planting for the community. In undertaking work a man is entitled to food tickets which bear a proportion to the work he has actually done. If he takes away the articles made, the food tickets are counted as part of the cost of production. There are good cheap restaurants at the Labour Market where these tickets are accepted as money. My informant told me that by degrees a great desire had grown up in the whole community to make its town beautiful; especially the Labour Market and its surroundings, which had become the people's

pride. - By free labour, cheerfully contributed, reading rooms, libraries, recreation rooms, cricket and football fields had been erected and laid out. This had been done very gradually, as no one had been employed except men out of work, and these were frequently changed ; but a kind of *esprit de corps*, had grown up even among the workless, one readily stepping into another's place ; while many eagerly used their leisure to learn at the Institute a new trade, foregoing wages in return for tuition. The beautiful statues, woodcarving, and other decorations of the Labour Market were all the free gift of the most accomplished men to the town.

I asked how such a beautiful institution had grown up. He replied that a wealthy citizen, noticing the numbers of unemployed at the time of a carpenters' strike, had started a workshop. That he died suddenly, and the men kept it on, and later, one of their number started a registry of the unemployed in other trades as well, and let men come in to carpenter while unemployed, or chop wood if they could not do better work. They were made, however, to promise that they would resume their proper

trade as soon as they could get regular employment. The association prospered, and bought a garden, and some of the men cultivated it; and so little by little the present Labour Market grew up. Its motto was "Work wins Wealth." They had learned that work in itself was good for man, apart from its wage, and they had extended the original idea, so that not only could the unemployed work, but any man or boy, in his unemployed time, could come and learn a new trade, or do extra things at his own trade, so that the Labour Market served also as a Labour School. He said that as every workman had now a workshop accessible, many carried out ideas that had come to them at their work, and afterwards patented them (in the old times a man was frequently turned away from his master's workshop if he attempted to use his tools in making things for himself). Many men thus made things useful for their homes, and the lads of the town got to like to use their spare time for all sorts of useful trades under proper restrictions. He said that in the old times people never had room to work in their own homes, and their mothers and wives thought them in the way:

also they had no tools or mechanical power at command. But now many a young man made all his own furniture before marriage in his spare time. I asked him how it was all managed. He said all was managed on co-operative principles, as men had come to understand that what was for the good of one was for the good of all. Each trade managed its own labour shop, and laid down rules to protect paid labour against the encroachments of voluntary labour. "Of course," he said, "since a man earns only a little beyond his bare food (except when he sells the article he has made at current prices, and repays in full all the cost of production, and a percentage to Labour Market expenses) there is little temptation to remain in the Labour Market if a place elsewhere is vacant. Good workmen are soon snapped up; and if after a time a man cannot find employment, he learns a new trade in which there is more demand, or one to which his powers are better suited. By an arrangement with employers, in case of a sudden large demand, learners are entitled to Labour Market wages for one fortnight, and then to full wages unless dismissed as unsuitable."

"But what about those who will not work?" I said.

"The Labour Market has immensely simplified the problem of dealing with them," he replied. "Each trade takes into consideration its own incompetent members. After a certain length of trial, if found a failure at his own trade, a man may choose another. He may try six trades one after another, and is allowed a certain time to learn each of them. If then he fails in all he is refused admission to the Labour Market. There are special regulations with regard to the old and infirm, but the able-bodied idler who is refused admission to the Labour Market usually gets passed on under police supervision to a Labour Colony, where he is made to work or left to starve."

"But how about those who do not come to the Labour Market?"

"Public opinion drives men to it. Every one knows a man need not starve if he will work, and relatives get tired of keeping an idler."

"How do you secure that a man should work a sufficient number of hours?"

"A man is paid in food tickets by the hour, according to the quality of his labour,

and expected to work a certain time. If he does not work well he has less food tickets, and consequently poorer food. If he works well his extra tickets are available for his wife and children, or if he has none, he can bank them, and use them for certain scheduled purposes. No drink tickets are issued. It has been found better to supply certain drinks (non-intoxicating) free, so that a thirsty man can drink when he needs it, and is not tempted to buy liquor which might unfit him for labour. Regulations for the supply of suitable drinks have been made by the workers themselves."

"What is the total result of the Labour Market?" I said.

"The old unorganised state of things has passed away, including the anxiety, destitution, and bitter jealousy that come of want of work. Brotherhood and good feeling have taken their place. Men see it is not to the advantage of the community to have 'out-of-work' men. No man need now be idle 'because no one has hired him.'"

This sketch, though acknowledged by the author to be ideal, may also be possible. It has been submitted to several practical men in various parts of the country, and their

verdict is that it is "practicable" if the inertia of the present, and the jealousies of various trades could be overcome. Probably difficulties in the way of the abolition of the slave trade, or the introduction of Free Trade, seemed quite as insuperable.

There are, however, certain historic instances which are held conclusively to militate against the *consideration* of organised employment of unemployed labour, as a contravention of political economy. In the next chapters I shall treat of these and of the progress that has already been made *towards* a Labour Market. The historical deterrents are:—

1. The failure of the old Poor Law, and the breaking down of the system of parish employment. The 43rd of Elizabeth authorised relief to the able-bodied only in return for work. The report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1834, pp. 21–24, says, "Whatever may be the difficulty of finding *profitable* work, it is difficult to suppose the existence of a parish in which it would not be *possible* to provide some work, were it merely to dig holes and fill them up again." The reason why this system of parish employment was utterly discredited appears

to have been maladministration, and lack of insight into true economic conditions. The methods of employing large numbers of men effectively are far better known now, and the conditions which lead to injurious interference with social economy, such as the breeding of a pauper class, far better understood.

Besides the argument throughout this book is for a treatment varying from *penal* to *remedial* for the class who drift into actual pauperdom. The function of a Labour Reservoir is to conserve *true labour* and prevent its deterioration to the incompetent level. The Labour Market should sort out the *effective*, and deal with the ineffective only by raising them to efficiency, casting them off for other treatment if this cannot be done. It would need to be backed up by a severer treatment of incompetency than our present system. The rogue and the vagabond at present earn easily a livelihood at the expense of others.

2. The second historical deterrent is the great failure of the municipal workshops started in Paris in 1848. A writer in the *Times*, December, 1892, giving an account of this experiment relates how the Provisional Government made "the fatal



announcement" that it would "guarantee work to every citizen." The establishment of national workshops was proceeded with. "In a few days" a plan was matured. The city of Paris was divided into twelve wards, each under a mayor. The unemployed man furnished himself with a certificate of domicile from his landlord, got it stamped by the police, and presented it at the office of the mayor of his ward. He received in exchange a ticket for work. This he presented at the office of the national workshop, and became one of a brigade of fifty-five. He was then paid 2 fr. per diem if at work, and 1 fr. 50 c. *if not*. He had also sick pay, medical aid, and boots and clothing at cost price.

The writer remarks, "The machine was beautifully constructed," and one may add, "Yes, for wholesale pauperisation." It may be noted that the first principles of wholesome relief were set on one side. The man received work as a social unit quite regardless of capacity; "many of the labourers were tradesmen unfit for the job." Pay was provided whether work was done or not, hence "many put no heart into their efforts, observing that anyhow some pay was secure." It was, in fact, a repetition on a

gigantic scale of the evils of the English Poor Law system. A Labour Market cannot be elaborated "in a few days." It must grow by degrees out of the patient and careful treatment of individuals. Experiment will be necessary; the finished plans of our huge reservoirs that supply a large population with water have not been elaborated in "a few days"; our elaborate National Banking system is a growth. Yet surely if we see the direction of progress, we may be wise to work towards the utilisation of every unit of waste labour. The failure of the Paris experiment was inevitable.

3. The name "Labour Market" was applied by Robert Owen to an experiment he made in London, but it was merely for the exchange of commodities made by members. A scheme of labour barter is now being tried in London, by means of "Labour Notes," but this is not *the employment of men while waiting for employment*, which is the essence of a true Labour Market.

4. A truer and more successful historical experiment is supplied by the provision of work for the unemployed during the cotton famine. At the beginning of the trouble

men were relieved without employment, though women and girls were gathered into sewing schools, about 25,000 able-bodied men and boys were receiving the means of subsistence without in any way labouring for it, though about 20,000 of these were also gathered into schools.

This caused "great uneasiness to those best acquainted with the district." Eventually loans were arranged for sewerage and street improvement mainly. It was found that the factory operatives readily acquired skill upon "measured work." ("Report on Unemployed," p. 396.) "The moral effect of the work was very valuable in its influences on the unemployed population." "This experiment in Lancashire ought to inculcate a lesson for future use, namely, that unskilled men may soon be taught the use of tools where practical means are found to furnish employment." "The work must, however, be necessary and useful, the men must have reasonable treatment and equitable payment, if possible by measurement. All notion of work as a punishment must be removed, and the men must be intelligently and kindly taught." "Government provided legal powers and money under certain speci-

fied and favourable conditions, but did not meddle or dictate as to the sort of works to be executed." Mr. Robert Rawlinson, to whom belongs the honour of carrying forward successfully this experiment, contrasts the success of this method of local initiation and control with the comparative failure of methods of relief in Ireland carried out throughout by Government. Sir John Gorst, speaking at a recent National Conference at the Guildhall, emphasises this point by saying, "Don't put too much trust in the central government. The proper initiative should proceed from local authorities, which could adapt their requirements to local conditions, their regulations are easily amended."

It will be seen, therefore, that in this historical instance we have an example of the effective creation of a temporary Labour Reservoir, which may be set over against historical failures. Sir R. Rawlinson (as he afterwards became) summarises the reasons for success ("Report on Unemployed," p. 401) in some observations which may be abstracted as follows: The public works in Lancashire served to prove that *willing and intelligent* men can soon learn a new occupation. If Government engineers had been sent down to provide employment for

all, the best and worst alike; the incapable, the unwilling, and the idle would have leavened the whole mass. No work was executed which was not desirable as a work of public utility, independent of the circumstances of the cotton famine. The works relieved the district of direct imposture to an extent which cannot be calculated. Poor Law officers witnessed, that the prevention of pauperism was at least to the extent of three times the number of men employed. The men were volunteers, they were divided into small gangs directed by skilled men, and every possible encouragement was offered to honest industry. So soon as any gang of men deserved it they were placed on piece work. The local authorities have regularly paid the stipulated interest for the money advanced by Government, and in due time the *entire amount of borrowed capital* will be returned into the national exchequer, "leaving Lancashire *richer by the full money value* of all the works undertaken at the time of her deep distress."

We have, therefore, an historical example of true Labour Market conditions, and the successful creation of this temporary reservoir was accompanied by no disturbance of the peace and order of the district.

## CHAPTER VI

### OBSTACLES TO THE LABOUR MARKET

ON every side the modern world is rapidly changing, and the evolution is from individualism to collectivism. Organisation is but another word for the formation of social organisms instinct with more or less vivid life. It is no longer possible for an individual to live a comparatively simple existence, he is drawn whether he will or no into combinations which act as if they were organisms instinct with a single will.

Corporate life in past ages may be compared to the quiet formation of vegetation : it proceeded under great general types which persisted for generations, and gave unity to the social order. The world is covered by these types of life which are survivals of the past. The "mustard trees" of our fathers have grown into great spreading organisations whose interlacing branches are in-

terwoven in our society. Churches and Sunday Schools, infirmaries and charities, belong to this type, and businesses were once built up in the same way. But these quiet forms of social life have been succeeded by an age of restless activity. We may compare humanity to a great heaving sea, which has bred a number of predatory forms of life. Those individuals who are not linked efficiently to others in some social organisation easily go to the bottom.

"Trades unions," "combines," "trusts," "companies," "societies," "businesses," all testify to the need for combination for self-protection, and are apt to become predatory on one another. Our very cities tend to organic structure, they divide into "east" and "west," develop "hearts" and a "circulation," an elaborate system of communication between the social units makes them "sensitive" to outer changes, and often very "nervous." The form of a city tends to be annular or radiate, and each one tends to develop a specialised life.

All this development, so rapid as to take us by surprise, so native to the times that, whether we will or no, we find ourselves involved in it (and becoming a cell in various

forms of life ourselves), is but the pressure put upon us by Providence to evolve forms of combination instead of competition. At present the effort to exist is so great that men struggle with each other in all sorts of predatory ways.

The vandalism which has led to the erection of huge advertisements of somebody's pills near every pretty little town on the main railway routes to London, is not only social waste, it is also a form of social armament. Men are struggling for a "competence," or for wealth which will put them on a level above anxiety, but too often, when secured, the wealth hardly obtained is seized from them by one of the sharks of society.

The firms that largely advertise may almost be compared to those ancient sea-monsters that added scale to scale till their armament against each other grew to something portentous. "Combines" and "trusts" are larger monsters still. Yet all these forms of life may die down before the evolution of a higher order. An arrangement of human life on a basis of mutual helpfulness, instead of competition, is possible. The royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the ultimate law of life.

In progress from one form of life to



another there are always ideas to be outgrown. It was probably impossible under feudalism to conceive of an individual who did not owe allegiance to some suzerain; until the idea of liberty had so taken hold of men that they were able to conceive of independence. So now competition has got such a hold of men that they can hardly conceive that a higher order of social arrangements is possible. Yet it is not *necessary* that human life should be predatory, it is but the stage between liberty and brotherhood.

The deep-rooted idea that constantly interferes with evolution in the direction of a Labour Market (though, as will be shown later, that evolution is very marked) is the current opinion that supply of work to the workless takes "the bread out of other mouths." The idea of a "wage fund" has been exploded, yet *this* idea persists. People imagine that there exists a definite amount of employment to be shared by every one. If I give John Smith work in the Labour Market, the work he does will crowd out a hypothetical Tom Brown from his trade, or lower wages all round. From this point of view there must always exist a surplus of definite extent of those who are "economically superfluous,"

liable to increases and decreases according to the state of trade. Like Malthus's theory of population, now also questioned, this theory seems to shut us up in the present state of things. But if we examine history we shall see that mankind is bounded by no such arbitrary line. Rather the expansion of labour provides steady pressure on the boundary line of an expanding area, and there is nothing to show that this area may not be made to include every human unit.

Suppose we have a savage tribe, and that a number of fresh individuals are born into it. Each of these is supported by an extension of the hunting grounds of the tribe. But, after a while, if pressure on the means of subsistence is greater, the tribe may spread too far, and be hemmed in by others. War may of course ensue, but another process is possible, and may take place if the government of the tribe is strong enough to hold steadily what it possesses. This new development may be called a kind of *intensive* process, by which what is already possessed becomes a means of fuller subsistence. The tribe may become pastoral, or agricultural, or develop as fishermen. Trades are begun. The elaboration of life con-

tinually goes on. The most marked example of this is in civilised countries. It was feared when the diversion of large areas from agriculture to sheep-farming took place, that the population of England would decline, but her life has been elaborated by commerce. It was feared that when machinery made one man able to do the work of many, a large number would be deprived of subsistence; but thousands now live where hundreds lived before. The employment of all the unemployed that at present exist would be but a small change in comparison with these great industrial changes. Every year new businesses are formed, new mills erected, which employ thousands of hands, yet this is only "legitimate competition." But if for charitable or semi-charitable purposes, a few hundreds of unemployed are found work—even if the greatest care is taken not to undersell the market by what they produce—the cry is raised that they are "taking others' bread." The prejudice is so strong that it prevents a great deal of remedial work for paupers and prisoners, and seriously handicaps charitable institutions. A new manufactory may do the same thing on a larger scale, and no one complains. It is well

known that people must shift from one trade to another as need arises, but it is not realised that the total conditions of labour are not rigid but movable.

We must therefore clearly realise :—

*That the employment of the unemployed may not largely affect the labour question at all:* that is to say, not to its detriment, but rather to its advantage. It is easy to see what a toning up of national life would take place if each individual was economically employed and the competition of the inefficient was removed.

Several things may happen other than interference with those already employed.

1. The Labour Colony may be largely a consumer of its own produce. This is definitely claimed as the result of German Colonies in the "Report on the Unemployed" (p. 286), which states that "those best qualified to judge of the economic effects of the German Colonies are unanimously of opinion that they have had no influence upon the rates of wages." "The bulk of their produce is consumed in the Colony, or in charitable institutions more or less definitely connected with it." It will be evident that they must act, therefore, as a relief to poor rates and charity, and thus indirectly subsidise wages.

Although holding the view that "throwing on the market at sacrifice prices produce grown by means of a subsidy from the charitable might have a disastrous effect upon the producers of similar commodities," the compiler of the report is "unable to trace any influence of this sort definitely to the Colonies." "The colonists are a class apart from ordinary labour, whose labour is inefficient and non-competitive, whose spasmodic appearance in the labour market can have no influence upon regular employment." The Colonies are sought as places of refuge in winter, and thus tend to equalise winter and summer supply of casual labour.

2. The employment found may create a new trade. It is an interesting fact that since the Labour Home was started in connection with Central Hall, Manchester, which employs men at wood-chopping, not only has the Church Army started a similar industry, but two or three wood-chopping places *on a purely commercial basis* have been started. Yet the original place has no difficulty of disposing of its firewood. Practically a new industry has been created. In the same way, General Booth's plan for the collection and treatment of salvage, carried out at Battersea,

actually creates a new form of social industry which may be likened to the production of aniline dyes from waste coal products.

3. The employment of the unemployed, and utilisation of waste time would create a great extension of the home market. The cry to-day is for "markets," yet what market is so secure as the home one? There is a steady demand for the necessities of life which at present is not met. Certain staple trades would receive a great impetus if our national life were fully utilised. The tendency of a Colony is to *create* a demand for carpenters and builders. Viewed under this aspect, the work of Pastor Bodelschwingh in Germany is most instructive.

Five-and-twenty years ago the class of epileptics was regarded as unemployable to a large degree. But the genius of Bodelschwingh has applied to them the redemptive power of labour, and numbers are now earning their living. The "Colony of Mercy" is a hive of busy industry. It has "swarmed" into workshops, and taken hold of other social problems. Among these is the *housing* question. Bodelschwingh's idea is to settle the working-man in his own house, with his own garden, thus nipping

Nihilism in the bud. He aims at making homes, and so making contentment. Bodelschwingh set his staff to examine what had been done in other countries for the housing of the poor. He made calculations and drew plans. He bought land on the hillsides over against his Colony. He used the labour of epileptics to dig and level. He planned workmen's houses, each on its own plot of land. The working-man had no capital. Pastor Bodelschwingh became trustee and legal owner till one-third of the loan required to pay for house and land was returned, with a right to buy the owner out if he failed in yearly payments. The right of pre-emption at original cost was also preserved, lest the man should be tempted to sell to speculators. In ten years a man becomes his own landlord. The average cost of one of these workmen's houses is £325, including cost of land and roading. Land is not bought till a number of married working-men of good character are ready to join the Association. They are allowed to build their houses as they like them. The work is not given to a building society which runs up rows of "matchboxes." Now evidently there will be an *increase* of em-

ployment for masons, carpenters, &c., under this plan of separate homes. The Association Arbeiterheim (Workmen's Home) is spreading, and is regarded as so secure that *it has become a national investment* for a portion of the national insurance fund. The somewhat similar experiment at Bourneville also evidently provides *increased* occupation for builders, and indirectly for furniture makers, &c. It is not claimed, of course, that those employed were unemployed, but this is given as an example of the possibility of wide extensions of the home market under better conditions for the working classes.

4. *The increment of value* arising from a more complete use of the gifts of Nature is not sufficiently taken into account.

Just on the border of Hadleigh Farm Colony are two small plots of land growing nothing but weeds. They are still uncultivated and unused, to the detriment of the Colony into which they "seed." They have never paid rates. Yet their value has risen from £10 and £12 respectively, when the Colony was formed. One has changed hands at the end of eleven years for £65. If the land had been owned by the Colony, the sale would have been equivalent to a handsome



donation. The land all round "Garden City" and "Bourneville" will also rise in value.

A Berlin Colony sold the greater part of the land purchased six years after its foundation at a large profit. "If the amount of the Government valuation were realised, the Colony would have raised the value of its investments from £7,200 in 1883 to £17,500 in 1891, an annual increment of £1,300, which, if deducted from the annual subsidy of £2,010, would reduce the cost of the Colony to £710 per annum, or a cost of £1 11s. 6d. per man benefited. Contrast with this our expenditure on paupers! The real solution of our out-of-work problem therefore appears to be in the direction of a town Labour Market, supplemented by carefully-planned home colonisation.

5. The glut of land and labour and capital in bad times is *simultaneous*, as John Hobson points out. Therefore the employment of labour and capital in land to equalise industrial disturbances is in the end profitable for all three.

"Lancashire was richer *by the full money value* of all the works undertaken under the powers of the Public Works Act, 1863-64." We have only to contrast our side of the

Channel with France to see that we are not making the full use of our heritage. In France the most careful system of "petite culture" makes every yard of land a picture of industry. On our side of the Channel we see broad stretches of similar soil abandoned to sheep. Yet our neighbours to a great extent are feeding us. What need to further impoverish ourselves by sending abroad to our colonies the hardiest and most enterprising of our sons, when England is becoming to a large extent "derelict land!" Sir John Gorst says, "If you set 100 unemployed men to produce food, they are not taking bread out of other people's mouths. Men so employed would be producing what is now imported from abroad, and what they themselves consume. An unemployed man, whether he is a duke or a docker, is living on the community. If you set him to grow food, he is enriching the country by what he produces."

It must not be expected that the outlay of capital would be *immediately* productive, but it would *eventually* be exceedingly so. "Can a nation be born in a day?"

At Pitfore, on the banks of the Forth, some years ago, 250 acres were reclaimed, and paid back all the outlay in ten years. To this day it is the most fertile land in the country.

Without touching "vested interests" there is work that can be done on the Thames, in depositing waste dredging in suitable positions on the foreshores and filling up embankments. The Wash also appears to afford an opportunity for labour. It is calculated that this would employ 10,000 men for fifteen years and add a new county to England. Land reclaimed in East Fen and Wildmore gave at thirty years' purchase a net increased capital of £2,445,780. With a thoroughly organised Labour Market it would be easy to supply a varying number of surplus men for work of this kind, which would employ unskilled labour. By a gradual system of promotion among these "soldiers of industry" men might be passed on to land Colonies and thoroughly trained.

The afforestation of waste lands appears also to be a matter of grave national import. (See "Report of Departmental Committee on British Forestry," 1902.) In Germany land not worth more than 4s. per acre has been raised in value to 38s. by afforestation. The difference in labour required is: "One man to 1,000 acres for sheep-farming," "one man to 100 acres for forestry, *besides* the labour required to work up and move the timber."

It appears therefore that the wise investment of capital in land, and the application of labour to it for several consecutive years, would result in reabsorption of the population in rural pursuits, and relieve the glut of land, labour, and capital.

Apart from these national developments of industry as applied to land, there is much that could be done in the neighbourhood of towns if Labour Markets were established. Many fine sites in our towns are occupied by decaying or condemned property, or ruinous factories. Plots of land permit of being laid out for gardens or for building, and sites could be prepared for workmen's suburbs. There is much *profitable* investment of capital close at hand, which is not undertaken by *private* individuals because it requires large outlay of capital without quick returns, yet which would ultimately entirely repay itself. Probably workmen's suburbs carefully planned, with room for gardens and quick transit to town, would have a great success. It may be objected that if the labourers have voluntarily left the land it would be difficult to get them back ; but the reply is that our present village communities labour under many disabilities. Their life is lacking in brightness,

and agriculture presents all the features of a decaying industry. A carefully planted and planned community like Bourneville or Port Sunlight or Garden City has *attractive* qualities absent from many English villages owing to wretched housing, poor lighting, and defective social and sanitary conditions. It is no wonder that the young migrate to the towns under present conditions, they can hardly do otherwise.

It will be seen therefore that under all these counts there is room for the absorption into a healthy national life of a greater volume of labour than that of the unemployed. Every generation a number of workers *have* so been absorbed; the surplus of inefficient or incapable or temporarily unemployed alone constituting the problem. Can we not drain the marsh lands of humanity and turn them to fertile soil? It would be strange indeed if a generation which makes use of capital to an extent unthought of in past times, should sit down puzzled as to a right and profitable use of each unit of our national capital of labour.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EVOLUTION OF A LABOUR MARKET

LONG ago the "Rochdale Pioneers," in forming their Co-operative Society, stated it as one of their objects "to commence the manufacture of such articles as the Society may determine on, for the *employment of such members as may be without employment*, or where labour may be badly remunerated." In England social progress usually takes place by means of sporadic private enterprise, which seizes hold of some problem, and applying common sense and individual effort to it, forms the nucleus of further developments and leads to changes in legislation.

It would be strange therefore, if, considering the pressing nature of the unemployed problem, we did not find already in our social life attempts to solve it. I shall try

to prove that these are really *the evolution of a Labour Market* in progress.

1. At the bottom of the ladder we have the present arrangement for stone-breaking or oakum picking. This system is economically wasteful and socially useless. I am told that stones are fetched from quarries to the London labour yards, broken there, and carted back into the country, as they are of no use for London pavements. *They are then not worth so much as before they were broken up.* The picking of oakum now that we have iron ships is just as economically useless. Yet it is still within the power of Guardians to try experiments which might lead to a better state of things. Under Statutes of George III. and William IV. they have power to occupy 50 acres of land in each parish of their Union for the purpose of providing work. The Local Government Board has to issue rules for their guidance.

At Cranbrook the Guardians had a farm for over 80 years. There was a rental of £302 per annum. It was extremely useful for training men and boys, and paid well in the times of high prices, but in 1855 the Poor Law Board insisted on

the trustees giving up the farm. They had a balance of £3,000 to £4,000 in hand. The objection stated was that the excess of labour should not be kept in the parish, but should circulate to where there was a demand for it. At present we greatly need to settle labour on the land.

Boards of Guardians are also empowered by the Local Government Board to send able-bodied men to privately organised Farm Colonies, where they will receive training in work, and to pay 5s. a week for the maintenance of each man, as at Hadleigh.

It will be seen, therefore, that it is *possible* to experiment in connection with our present Poor Law system, but such experiments must be for those who are *actually on the rates*, and not for those who can earn an independent livelihood. They should be of the nature of semi-penal Colonies for the tramp; or Labour Farms or Colonies for the able-bodied incapable, or inefficient men, surrounded by restrictions which deter the genuine working man from entering them. Some legal power is needed to detain, and State registration to identify, the individual. Each man needs to be known and dealt with as a unit.



2. We have next various private and mostly charitable efforts to meet the need.

(a) At Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Newcastle, Darlington, Liverpool, and Rochdale, the Charity Organisation Society has provided "labour yards." These were used "both as a means of giving temporary employment and as a test of willingness to work." (See "Report on Unemployed," p. 148.) In most cases, however, the Charity Organisation Society does not attempt to find employment for men out of work, and even refuses to help an unemployed man. But "this only applies to ordinary times, when it is presumed that *on the whole* a sufficient supply of work exists; it is admittedly inapplicable to times of unforeseen or exceptional scarcity of work." It is assumed that a line can be drawn between "normal" and "exceptional" distress. With regard to the latter the Charity Organisation Society lays down the rule that "to deal with large numbers of people quickly and effectually 'tests' are necessary." It distinguishes the class of "thrifty and careful men" and recommends that if public works are opened they should take such work as a temporary employment.

Poor Law labour yards are sometimes "the only test available." It will be seen that the Charity Organisation Society regards labour yards therefore rather as a test than an employment, except in exceptional distress, and it regards stringent *individual* treatment as the heart of the matter.

(b) The labour homes of the Church Army and of some other charitable agencies provide work; wood chopping, carpentry, paperhanging and painting, &c., are the occupations. Some of these institutions, however, bulk largely in the public eye in comparison with the number of men dealt with.

(c) The Salvation Army Social Scheme is a much larger experiment, and in some ways the pioneer of others. A full account is given in the "Report on the Unemployed," pp. 160-172. In connection with the "Elevators" the following are employed: Carpenters, joiners, cabinet makers, bed makers, tambourine makers, machinists, plumbers, bricklayers, painters, and decorators, packing-case makers, labourers, also paper and rag pickers. Others work as barrow men and load barges. There are also tin workers and blacksmiths. These

various trades principally supply Salvation Army wants, but also enter into open competition at market rates, and contract to supply labour. Each man works for food and shelter only during the first four weeks, and then receives payment in tickets. As soon as his sectional foreman announces that his labour is worth more, he is put on "full value" tickets, which purchase his meals and bed; what he earns over and above is first used for payment for clothes and other necessities; afterwards he may draw one-third of his grant in cash, the remainder being put to a reserve fund. Employers may come and pick men. There is a National Labour Exchange at the headquarters in Queen Victoria Street, supplemented by Shelters and Depôts. This town system, which is fully developed in London, and represented partially in some provincial centres, is backed up by the Hadleigh Farm Colony, to which men are sent to be trained for agricultural labour, market gardening, and poultry farming. Brickmaking is also carried on, but two kilns have been stopped for some time. The Social Wing of the Army also consists of a number of admirable institutions for dealing

with women. A network of Homes now covers the country. Some of them do laundry work, and all sewing, while in London there are several trades, such as knitting, bookbinding, and match-making, which employ women. I can speak from personal experience of the excellent way in which the Homes are managed. Girls who refuse to go into a Home for a long period will often consent to enter one of these. Their whole future career is altered for the better, even if the aim of the Army—their entire conversion—is not affected. After they pass out they are still under supervision, and are linked to the Home by many ties. They are often received back and protected between situations, and piloted to a secure life. Personal supervision and intimate knowledge of the individual is the key to their success.

These institutions are a real attempt to solve social problems and deal effectively with the most difficult cases.

It has been inevitable that in so large a mass of experiment mistakes should be made, but the gratitude of the nation is due to General Booth for acting as a pioneer and giving object lessons as to the way to treat the "submerged tenth." There are extra-

ordinary difficulties in new social experiments. Thus: it is the emphatic opinion of those in charge of Elevators and Farm Colonies that some legal power is required to retain the unsatisfactory element for training. Just those who are the source of most danger to the community drift away. There is, however, some legal power over "ticket-of-leave" men and paupers committed by Guardians to the Colony. Again, in all experiments of this kind the need is greatly felt for trained officers. This constitutes a difficulty at the outset. An ideal Salvation Army Officer is not necessarily a man well acquainted with social problems, and the work of superintendence of so many departments requires a large staff acquainted with various trades. The Army has succeeded wonderfully in raising up a body of devoted men and women, but has often to rely on those whose work educates them for service, rather than on those whose previous education fits them for it. Difficulties and mistakes which occur in consequence should receive the sympathy of those who stand on one side and do not attempt practical solutions of social problems, not their severe criticism. It is doubtful whether

so large an experiment as a Farm Colony which receives the lowest class can be carried on successfully as a private charity. The Army appears to receive more State aid in other countries than in our own.

During the twelve months ending Sept., 1903, 1,721 men passed through the Elevators.

(d) There are other small experiments in Farm Colonies, namely Lingfield, in Surrey, the Starnthwaite Labour Colony, and the Self-Help Emigration Society's Training Farm, &c. These useful efforts point out the direction of progress, but cannot grapple with the problem on a scale sufficient to make any appreciable difference to it. The main value of all such small experiments is that they afford an effective practical education to a number of workers, as also to some extent does Settlement work, especially in times of distress. All such efforts are severely handicapped by the necessity of claiming charitable support. Some few of the Salvation Army Homes have become self-supporting.

Surely, however, money should not be grudged for these forms of social experiment. We spend thousands of pounds in developing a new patent, in sport, in scientific apparatus.

Money should not be grudged for new methods of developing men and for pioneer work in Social Science. Even if a man is not self-supporting, his cost in an "Elevator" or on a Farm Colony is less than in work-house, asylum, or prison. It is not yet recognised that it is as important to subject the microbes of social disorder to minute investigation in some kind of social microscope, as to examine the microbes of disease. "The proper study of mankind is man."

3. The *Labour Bureau* is an essential part of the Labour Market, and its functions have already been touched on. It is multiplying and extending in a manner that shows its adaptation to modern needs. Witnesses as to the working of two Labour Bureaux—the Rev. W. Tozer, of Ipswich, and Mr. E. T. Scammell, of Chelsea—were examined before the Royal Commission on Labour. The object of these Bureaux is stated to be simply to find people employment. They may fit people in who have been misplaced and also lend money for locomotion. Their success depends on *the extent to which recommendation is a guarantee of character*. This fact leads on naturally to the application of a labour test, and the application of a labour

test is a step towards the *natural evolution of a Labour Market*. Thus at the Labour Bureau, Central Hall, Manchester, already described, where the test of wood-chopping is applied, the manager says, "What we want is a few more trades," and he also speaks of the need for a Farm Colony near Manchester.

4. The temporary *creation of a Labour Market* is now frequently recurrent in the shape of a Municipal Relief Works, and this is the most significant feature in relation to the problem, and must have widespread results. The fitful charitable dole system has been found so unsatisfactory that attempts to utilise the labour of the unemployed for some public object are becoming more frequent. Information respecting Municipal Relief Works occupies pages 181-237 of the "Report on the Unemployed." The most noteworthy points are:—

(a) The action of the Local Government Board in recognising the existence of "Artisans who have hitherto avoided poor-law assistance, and who are temporarily deprived of employment" (p. 186).

(b) Their recommendation of a provision of public employment.



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(c) The recognition of the policy of a public loan for such a purpose, sanctioned by the Board of Trade.

(d) The fact that local authorities are shown to have taken action as follows :—

- 38 Provided roadmaking and sewerage.
- 22 Stonebreaking.
- 31 Roadsweeping.
- 24 Digging work in parks, &c.
- 8 Sifting sand, &c.
- 5 Sewage work, &c.
- 6 Painting.
- 11 Other kinds of work.

Thirty-five Labour Registries are shown to have been established, mostly temporary. The larger number of the men employed seem to have been inefficient, and as time has gone on, the necessity of expedients for sifting these out has been more and more recognised. Thus at West Ham during winter an organised system of visitation made the facts ascertained in each case fairly accurate. Only married men were employed, and they must have resided in the district six months. Three days' work a week was, however, all that was provided, and a man had often to wait for that owing to the great number out of employment. It is evident that in this

district the problem of the unemployed attained such dimensions that it was impossible for the distressed municipality wholly to cope with it. Therefore from this quarter comes pressure for Government action, to finance some scheme of national importance (such as reclamation of waste land) which would relieve the local pressure.

The extent to which a municipality may be overburdened by the sudden accumulation of a "pool" of unemployed men is shown by what occurred at Chicago after the World's Fair. This illustrates the fact that such an accumulation is a peril incident to our form of civilisation, not an accident due to trade conditions in an old country. Large numbers of men having been attracted by the World's Fair were left stranded without employment and the municipality was besieged by a *multitude of starving men willing and eager to work*.

It is evident, therefore, that cases may arise too complicated for municipal action as the fluidity of labour increases, and that the formation of National Labour Reservoirs is but a measure of precaution.

But the formation of *Municipal* Labour Reservoirs appears to be already pressed

upon us periodically by the exigencies of the times. Birmingham states that "of course the most useful employment for men out of work would be trades in which they are accustomed to work," yet regards "municipal workshops as out of the question." Yet in the direction of municipal workshops we are undoubtedly proceeding. Our Town Councils have become large employers of labour, and new schemes are always before them. If the municipality simply becomes an employer this does not relieve the pressure, but if the Poor Law Authority and the municipality worked hand in hand, it would be possible for the municipality to initiate or carry on public works so as to equalise pressure on the workhouse. By present arrangements the pressure of the unemployed is felt on the Poor Rates, not on the Borough Rates. Some gauge is needed to measure the amount of unemployment. If there was a Municipal Labour Bureau, which worked hand in hand with the Poor Law Authorities, the Relieving Officer would speedily ascertain the history of applicants. An excessive amount of unemployment would soon register itself, and might form a call for some special municipal

work which involved employment of large numbers of men. Thus the carrying out of a new tramway scheme saved a northern town from distress during winter. But there should be something like a *simultaneous* movement in this direction in different municipalities, as "out-of-works" swarm to a place where work is to be had. Also Poor Law areas are better units than boroughs, which are often circumscribed by out-townships. A large community like London should be a unit, the West bearing the burdens of the East. In fact, a widening and unification of our town areas, and the prospective inclusion of adjoining country, is much needed.

If a Labour Bureau existed in connection with each municipality as the nucleus of a Labour Market, a great deal of the difficulty attending temporary relief works would be done away with. It might become a registry and gauge of *efficient* labour. A standard of efficiency equal to that of the average workman, and the "searching test" of continuity of labour would weed out the "loafer" and "inefficient" for other treatment. The Labour Market should not be a charity, simply a *sufficient supply of employ-*

*ment to efficient men.* The temporary nature of these schemes of municipal relief and their spasmodic nature leads to some of their worst features :—

(a) There is always a preliminary period of demoralisation during which distress is growing acute.

(b) There is apt to be a rush of unemployed from other quarters on the rumour of work.

(c) There is great loss of time, and charitable exertion spent in investigation, *before* the inefficient or unfit cases are weeded out. This is repeated every time.

We do not think of forming reservoirs in *winter* when the floods are out, we build them in summer in preparation for winter floods. The thin stream of unemployment in summer should be effectively dealt with, and measures would be indicated fitted to cope with greater need. The London County Council is at the present moment proceeding in the direction I have indicated. It is working in entire harmony with the Guardians. Last winter the Guardians and the Borough Council employed 1,301 unemployed men by giving them two days' work a week at 6d. an hour for eight hours. They

thus helped many of them back to regular employment. The Council also maintains Labour Bureaux at the public libraries, but there is a dearth of *employers'* applications. The Committee of the London County Council is making this recommendation, that the General Purposes Committee should consider and report upon the question of preparing schemes of public works, which may be usefully carried out in the country during periods of distress. They also purpose to communicate with the Prime Minister with regard to constituting the condition of unemployed workers a subject of local administration and establishing an industrial organisation throughout the country.

The results of the schemes actually worked fully bear out my own conclusion (see "Report on Unemployed," pp. 188-235) that the relief work should be looked on as "a means for ascertaining fitness" (p. 236) and that no permanent good results from giving *temporary* employment to the incapable and inefficient. Good supervision is essential, and *continuity of employment* the best test. "Schemes which provide a few days' work for a large number of men in successive shifts are likely to be abused," they are un-

likely to be organised and administered with sufficient *completeness and elasticity* to enable them to be of service for the *lasting assistance* or reformation of the chronically idle or incapable. The existence of a permanent Labour Bureau supplemented by some labour test would remove this difficulty, and afford accurate data for the undertaking of municipal enterprise as need arose. Steps such as the London County Council are taking are useful indications of progress in the direction of a permanently organised Labour Bureau which would supply :—

(a) A continuous gauge of the number of *bona fide* working men out of employment.

(b) A permanent division into its elements of the unemployed problem. (For the lines of sifting see Report of Charity Organisation.)

(c) A possible field for the transfer of men from one employment to another, and back into agriculture through training Colonies.

(d) The data for a well-considered national system, instead of a mere sporadic local action.

(e) The foundation of a National Labour Exchange.

(f) Opportunity for systematic local en-

qu岸ry and right treatment of the individuals permanently weeded out as outside the Labour Market.

(g) Adaptations to local conditions of labour.

We have now to consider—

5. Movements in the direction of a Labour Market in other countries.

The most marked example of this is the New Zealand “Bureau of Industries,” which is practically a well-developed Labour Market. By the “co-operative system” a small party of men (usually six) elect a ganger. They are then allotted a section of road-making. Labour coupons are employed as payment, entitling the bearer to food, bed, &c., in certain lodging-houses. The system is very similar to that which was successful in Lancashire in the time of the cotton famine. “Every effort, short of espionage, is made to ascertain the *bona fides* of applicants.” “The Government engineer states a price for the portion of work.” “The system is called that of ‘co-operative contracts.’” The report on this system states, “It will soon be necessary for New Zealand to gravely consider the subject of the classification and employment of the poorer members of our society. The



present system of charitable aid is faulty in the extreme : the dependant classes should be divided into three distinct orders—viz. the helpful poor, who only need guidance and direction to enable work and the worker to be brought together ; the helpless poor, who are to be regarded as subjects for charitable aid ; the criminally lazy poor, who should be compelled to work, if necessary, under restriction. The organisation of the whole could only be attempted by some strong central power." ("Report on the Unemployed," p. 351.)

The advantage of Bureaux for giving advice to men needing it, and advancing fares to spots where labour was needed (to be refunded afterwards) has been found to be very great. Government Labour Bureaux have also been opened in New South Wales and Queensland.

6. It is much to be regretted that we have not a Ministry of Labour and an organised method of obtaining accurate *annual* reports on all matters affecting labour problems. The "Board of Trade Report" (from which so many quotations are made) presented in 1893, is most valuable, but if a Report such as this could have been issued

annually and supplemented by the newest information as to experiments at home and abroad, and as to the success of old ones, how much valuable information would have accumulated in the ten years! It is surely quite time that we made the scientific enquiry into labour conditions possible by the organisation of a State Department. The publications of the Board of Trade are most useful but do not embrace many aspects of the question. Still, imperfect as they are, all Government enquiries and statistics must be reckoned as a factor towards a wise and far-reaching policy in the treatment of the unemployed question.

Undoubtedly evolution is in the direction of definite Government enquiry, if only because of the fuller knowledge, attained by such methods, of American and German labour conditions, and of the state of employment in our Colonies.

7. It would seem to be the policy of large bodies of self-respecting men who spend great sums of money on "out-of-work" pay to carry out by means of some such organisation as the "Co-operative Wholesale Society" the policy enunciated by the Rochdale Pioneers of "commencing the manufacture of such

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articles as the Society may determine on for the employment of such members as may be out of employment." Such large sums of money have been spent in "out-of-work pay" or "travelling benefit" as might surely have sufficed to provide some form of work to tide over evil times.

The following have spent in unemployment and travelling in search of work :—

Engineers : £1,718,144 in 42 years ; = £48 8s. 5½d. per member.

United Pattern Makers : £20,902 in 20 years ; = £15 7s. 0½d. per member.

London Society of Compositors : £12,000 in 1892.

Travelling and out-of-work benefit means in itself such an accurate knowledge of individuals as might help greatly in the task of providing continuous work for efficient workmen. It appears as if the working classes might, in time, realise the value of the policy of holding sufficient capital and land to embark on projects that would afford employment to ease industrial distress, at any rate during widespread strikes, instead of doling out grants to idle men. But at present the jealousies of different trades would prevent such action. The idea of

"taking bread out of others' mouths" has great currency among working men. Otherwise the policy of "no earnest, sober, striving man out of work" would surely appeal to their sympathy. A vague Socialism which aims at the holding of *all* land and capital by the nation is held by many as a "counsel of perfection." This exerts a steady pressure in favour of municipalisation of water, tramways, lighting, &c., which is felt increasingly all over England. The success of many of these municipal enterprises in reducing rates, and the effective management of large municipal works in London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Birmingham, Bolton, Leicester, Oldham and other towns is accustoming working men to municipal management, and would undoubtedly pave the way for a Labour Market if the idea was widely assimilated.

8. Under the foregoing seven heads many streams of influence making for a definite solution of our unemployed problem have been collected and tabulated. But the very collection of them may mask the most important fact of all.

This is that there is a *definite subliminal uprush* into the spirit of our times in the direction of a Labour Market.

F. W. H. Myers has taught us in his book on human personality how in the life of an individual there develop subliminally those forces which shape life, and are evidenced from time to time by *incursions* into consciousness. Benjamin Kidd, in "Social Evolution," has shown us that the surviving factors of the present, and important factors of the future, make their appearance as it were underneath the trend of surface life, but are selected naturally for future usefulness. The real importance of the facts I have adduced is their *spontaneous appearance* in our national life at many different points, their vitality and adaptation to the needs of the present and future, and their *embodying*, though at present only in a sporadic and feeble form, the desires and aspirations that underlie our practical life. The classification I have made and the sketch of treatment will *appeal* to the underlying consciousness of many readers of this book. A subtle change has passed over the underlying "Zeitgeist." If you examined the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries you would see on every hand sporadic foreshadowings of *liberty*. Now we see on every hand sporadic indications of a yearning for the

practical working out of *brotherhood*. Underneath the predatory and uncertain commercial life of our day there is a deep desire for a position of greater stability, for the removal of flagrant social ills, for the development of each human unit. The various institutions and efforts which have been detailed represent so many "uprushes" of this subliminal spirit as have eventuated in practical endeavour. It is the existence of this underlying desire which is the most hopeful feature. Will it be strong enough to modify our national life *in time*? Are the conservative elements of our society too deep-rooted for such modification? We stand as a nation at the point between degeneracy and progress, according to how we yield to the subliminal uprush which is shaping our fortunes whether we will or no. We may produce by repression that "divided mind" which is the sign of both national and individual decay. The issues before us will be summed up in the concluding chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FLUIDITY OF LABOUR

THE lowest rung of our social ladder is the workhouse. This is supposed to meet the needs of our indigent poor. Is it doing so effectively when the number of indoor paupers has increased from 55,221 to 73,254 in London between 1883 and 1903, and from 139,451 to 175,855 in the country?

In London the total Poor Law expenditure has grown from £2,435,164 in 1891 to £3,770,926 in 1901. Yet what remedies for social ills have we to show for it?

Great changes have passed over our country, the whole industrial organisation is different, yet we maintain our Poor Laws unaltered. It is true that great improvements have taken place, and are still in progress, in the management of our workhouses, but the law is little altered, and the

most enlightened Guardians complain of the way in which it fetters wise action.

Want of provision for the fluidity of labour is at the root of much trouble. The present Poor Law is adapted to deal with a state of society when travel was the exception. If a man travelled he might be presumed to be a "tramp," and treated accordingly. The whole policy of the Poor Law is *deterrent* to a mobile condition of the population. A man has to reside a certain length of time to earn settlement, and has to be removed if possible to his parent Union. He can only claim hospitality as a tramp, unless he is entering the Union where he has a claim. The casual ward is supposed to be a refuge for the honest workman, as well as the tramp; practically it is unavailing for the former class. During last winter hundreds of men found their way to brickfields in Manchester, huddling on the ground near the fires, where they would at least be warm. A writer in the *Manchester Guardian* says, "The casual ward is the product of our social ingenuity. It is the provision which society, through the Poor Law Guardians, makes for the indigent poor—the poor who,



having nowhere else to go, go there. If it is the best that society can do, then of course society stands acquitted. But is it? Can it not in some way compete with the brick-field? The casual ward appears to have been designed for the express purpose of keeping casuals away."

That this indictment is not untrue is shown by the recent Report of the Commissioners of Prisons. The Commissioners comment on the great increase of convictions for offences against workhouse regulations, mostly committed by "casuals" who deliberately prefer prison to the casual ward. Prosecutions for such offences, which for some twenty years were between 2,000 and 4,000, rose in 1901 to 5,118. In one prison, Devizes, they nearly doubled. The governor of a prison which received a large number of these, comments on "the severity of the tasks imposed by the workhouse authorities and states that the oakum task prevailing in that district is an impossible task, even to the experienced oakum picker. He states also that many of the men convicted of refusing to work in workhouses appear to be genuine working men looking for employment, and he is of opinion that if a greater

discrimination were shown by the workhouse authorities in the treatment of the casual pauper class, there would be far less commitment to prison for begging, sleeping out, and crime generally." This criticism the Commissioners endorse at length, pointing out carefully that the preference for prison over casual ward is not due to any absolute attractiveness in the former. The *Manchester Guardian* recently pointed out that there the casual ward system "has palpably broken down."

The City Council received a report from a Special Committee on the "sleeping out" question. It was shown that while the Tame Street casual ward in Manchester never had more than one-third of its accommodation used, there were in midwinter men sleeping out nightly in numbers which a moderate estimate put at 500 a night. Neither prosecutions at the rate of 200 a month, nor bitter cold weather, diminished their numbers, private charitable shelters were full to overflowing. The inference was that the sleepers-out consisted in many cases of genuine unemployed workers with too much self-respect to accept the pauper brand, and this was confirmed by the researches of the Committee.

The Committee proposed that a secondary and easier form of admission for casuals should be introduced at Tame Street, the Local Government Board being approached for this object, and well-conducted private shelters should be subsidised, the Council in return exacting good sanitary management. The total sum proposed to be spent was only £500, but these recommendations have been shelved, though the Medical Officer of Health reported that disease was spread by these wayfarers and that he believed the only way to deal with them satisfactorily was to shelter them under the control of the Corporation. He said that the sooner the common lodging-houses of the city were brought entirely under the control of the Council the better it would be for the general public. The relaxation of Poor Law rules for which the Committee proposed to ask was only that men and women might be admitted at later hours and allowed to leave at an early hour in the morning, that they might have a chance of finding work.

They also advised a system of registration to stamp out the professional tramp. These recommendations, carefully considered and cautiously framed, were only negated by

twenty-two to eighteen. Fear lest Manchester should become the "dumping ground" of the unemployed, and conservatism on the part of Poor Law Guardians, appears to have been the cause of refusal.

The following account of actual experience may bring home casual ward conditions to the reader.

Imagine yourself on a pouring wet day, walking as swiftly as tired limbs will allow over the long stretch of miles between one Union and another. The compulsion of necessity is upon you. Your last night was spent in the Tramp Ward, and there is yet another long stage before you reach shelter and friends. Up, up, you go along country roads, thick with mud, till at last you reach the exceedingly high and breezy situation, miles out of town, chosen as a suitable spot for the Union Workhouse. You are just in time; at this Union admission would be refused after eight o'clock. A man admits you, asking name, age, where you came from, and destination. He is a pauper himself, and during the quarter hour in which you wait for an attendant, you are at his mercy. Women ought never to be admitted by a male attendant who is alone.

You sit in your wet clothes till the portress comes to you, not in an affable frame of mind. You are ordered to the bath, having to undress in the presence of the attendant, and having all your possessions taken away, and all your clothes. These are left wet, for you to resume in the morning. You don a nightgown, it may be cotton, or it may be rough flannel like old-fashioned bathing gowns. It is not *clean*, having been worn before, though it may perhaps have been stoved. With bare feet you are ordered into a stone cell lighted only by a small aperture high up, and told to make your bed. Four, or it may be, only two, coloured blankets are given you. In some work-houses these are stoved, in others not. You do not know who you are sleeping after, and the bath cannot remove all danger of infection or *creepers*. Make your bed, however, with thankfulness for shelter—if you can. It is a wire mattress with nothing to cover it but the blankets, and some ingenious person has also contrived a *wire pillow*, an instrument of torture, as you discover later. The floor is cold, and the stone walls give a feeling of dampness, your nightgown is thin, and you are warm

from the warm bath. So you hastily spread one blanket all over, double another for your shoulders (experience having taught you that you feel the cold wire through a double blanket and that it speedily abstracts heat from your body), and cover yourself with the two others. The wire pillow is a flat piece of wire netting like the mattress, raised a few inches above the bed. However you are not yet trying it as a pillow : you have to sit up in bed and receive your supper. A small lading can of gruel is given you, sweetened to nauseousness with some sort of treacle, and a thick slice of dry bread. Then you are locked in till early next morning. You are hungry enough for dry bread after the long tramp, but the gruel ! You gulp it down as liquid, but it and the dry bread raises within you a terrible thirst. And there is nothing to drink, nothing but the nauseous gruel. Oh for a drop of water to quench your thirst ! But you are locked in, no light save from the high gap in your prison wall. You must try to sleep away the hours, but how ? Try the pillow. The edge cuts the back of your neck. The hard wires press into your cheek. The bit of blanket you can spare

is no protection. You try all ways, but cannot get ease. At last you wedge your head *under* the pillow, double yourself up as best you can, and fall into an uneasy sleep. You wake dozens of times. In your restlessness the cold wire is uncovered, and your feet are chilled, or thirst masters sleep, or you wake to a sort of real nightmare, finding yourself in a dark, solitary cold cell on an uneasy bed. Morning comes at last, and your cell door is flung open, you are ordered to rise and dress. Your wet clothes are waiting for you; you may wash, and *drink* from the bathroom tap. Then breakfast, the same nauseous gruel and dry bread, unless, contrary to law, the humanity of the Guardians supplies you with a most welcome drink of coffee. You are told to throw the gruel away. In another workhouse it may not be sweet, it may be saltless. A workhouse official said it "was not fit for pigs." Playful or quarrelsome tramps often throw it at each other. No one could eat the quantity supplied. Yet after a supper and breakfast of this kind, combined with a warm bath, you feel strangely as if you had been under some medicinal treatment. Your pores feel open, you perspire freely, and are very

unfit for hard work. Nevertheless it is waiting for you, you cannot go out and seek work, you must pay for your excellent supper, bed and breakfast, by hard labour. For it *is* hard labour to stone or scrub or clean the tramp ward or other places to the satisfaction of a person whose standard of cleanliness is very high. It may take you all day: if so you have to endure another supper, bed and breakfast of the same description, with a dinner of bread and cheese. If you are fortunate, having done the requisite cleaning you are set free at eleven o'clock. You may carry off the rest of your supply of bread to sustain you in the tramp to another workhouse, six or eight miles away at least. You feel worn and weary, and are conscious that the rough work you have had to do has made your dress dirty and untidy. But there was no chance to wash any article of clothing, your spare things were confiscated. After a night or two of this treatment you feel ready to sleep in the open, or to beg fourpence for a common lodging-house, anything to escape, if possible, a repetition of such discomforts. This is not a fancy sketch, but a real experience of the treatment our country gives the female tramp.



Now, does not the decent man or woman who is stranded deserve to be treated with more consideration? Men who use the spade and pickaxe, finishing the job, then going to look for another, do not know where their next will be. They travel from village to village, from town to town, and in the process their money dwindles to nothing. Perhaps their tools are pawned and their surplus clothes, and from that point they sink gradually to the position of the casual, thence possibly to that of the "habitual tramp." The tramp is not in a position to keep himself clean. He becomes a contagion and a menace to the public health.

It may be that few genuine working men find their way to our tramp wards, but is that a public benefit? Surely a system intended to deal with the *needs* of the indigent poor should recognise that some public provision is required for the working man in search of work. The non-recognition of such a vital change in industrial conditions as that from a *mainly* stationary population to one in which fluidity is desirable, must be responsible for a large amount of misery. We should by all means *stop the manufacture of tramps*. In my first chapter I have shown

how the genuine tramp should be dealt with. The effective treatment of the tramp proper might leave us free to deal with the question of the homeless working man.

Shelters are springing up in many directions, and are an example of the sporadic charity above mentioned which meets, by private benevolence, public need. But we need to consider what is done in Germany to supply this need in order to realise how far we are from suitable provision for a public want.

The German Lodging House Union has 457 lodging-houses distributed throughout Germany, with decent accommodation and refreshment at low rates. These "Herbergen zur Heimat," or "Workmen's Homes," as they are called, provide "considerably more desirable lodging-places than any similar institutions in England." "The accommodation is superior to that provided by the municipality of Glasgow in their model lodging-houses." "Not only is the accommodation superior, but the cost is rather less." 3,200,000 guests in a year show that these "Herbergen" supply a real need.

Supplementing this provision there is a

series of Relief Stations at which men can work for their food and lodging. These "vagrants" then *pay* for their lodging at the Herbergen. Sometimes the guests in the Herbergen may be mostly genuine workmen, at other times tramps may form a large proportion. But they have worked to *earn* their lodging. The Relief Stations are something like the English Labour Yard. There are about 2,000 in the German Empire. By means of them the mobility of the unemployed labourer is increased. They enable him to go from a place in which there is no work for him to do to another in which he may find work. If the unemployed workman has sufficient resources to pay for food and lodging he may go on "Wanderschaft" without working his way. He will learn at the Herberge (which serves as a Labour Bureau) whether or not there is employment to be had in the neighbourhood, and if there is not he may wander on to the next town. If he has no resources he may work at wood-chopping in the morning, obtain his food and lodging, and wander on in the afternoon. With the increase in stations (as stated in the "Report on the Unemployed," p. 305) the number of

prosecutions for vagabondage decreased in the kingdom of Prussia from 23,808 in 1882, to 8,605 in 1890.

The state of our common lodging-houses is a social menace. Being mostly in private hands it is evident that their owners will not find it profitable to provide for the *maximum* of the floating population, since this would mean empty beds except in times of great need. In many the sanitary accommodation is utterly defective, and the sleeping arrangements make decency impossible. Cleanliness of person is out of the question. The private ownership leads to toleration of indecency, bad language and quarrelling. How can a woman, for instance, who owns such a lodging-house, impose effective restraint on the lodgers on whom she depends for her bread? Even the registration of such places and their occasional inspection does not secure sanitation. The utter vileness of some can only be realised by one who has entered them as an inmate. Yet here men, women and children are herded together. A person going to a town possessed of only money enough to pay 4d. for a bed, must perforce take what offers.

There exist in some towns municipal lodging-houses, but they are capable of much improvement. Separate sanitary and lavatory accommodation for the sexes should always be provided. In one, in a northern town, personally tested, single women and married couples shared the same sitting-room and kitchen. One w.c. served for all, and the only place for women to wash was the kitchen sink, in the presence of men, unless they paid extra for a bath. Many of the cubicles were infested with bugs. This leaves much to be desired, and the accommodation was so insufficient for town requirements that it was reckoned "lucky" to get a bed after seven o'clock. Yet this was said to be a "palace" to other places. Stories of sixteen married couples sleeping in one room, with *one pail* for sanitary convenience, of beds with heels touching heads, and of horrors of "buggy" or unclean beds, show that private accommodation is far behind the need. The registration and supervision of lodging-houses would not in itself meet the evil, for, as stated above, to ensure public health there should be in every town a supply of beds sufficient to meet the *maximum need*

of sleeping accommodation, but it can never be to private interest to supply this, though it is greatly to the *public* interest that men should not be driven to such an expedient as sleeping in brickfields to escape the Scylla of the tramp ward on one hand, and the Charybdis of the common lodging-house on the other. A bed in the open, if possible, is certainly preferable to either.

The kind of institution which would meet the need is provided by private charity at Bradford, Yorks, for *women*. It consists of a large mill which has been transformed suitably. On different stories are large dormitories with beds at 3d., 4d. and 5d. On the basement is a kitchen, amply provided for cooking, and with admirable lavatory accommodation *free*, while on the ground floor is a hall that can be used as a sitting room. Women can enter till 11 p.m., and restrictions are as few as possible. This is of course a lodging-house pure and simple, and no food is provided, but it is *exceptional* in our large towns to find a decent lodging-house *exclusively for women*, and not a Rescue or Refuge.

With regard to men. Manchester Central Hall affords a good example of what can be

done to meet the need, only it *combines* the functions of a German lodging-house, Relief Station, and Labour Bureau. It has been established ten years and is, apart from the cost of buildings, *self-supporting*. The men are received and interviewed one by one, those who have already been on the list one or two days having priority, and afterwards they are examined in order of application. Applications are received all day long, but men are not examined till the morning. A man is allowed to stay three nights as a test : as a rule one-tenth obtain work (by their own search for it) after the first night, others during the remaining days ; exceptional cases are allowed to remain longer and are found work. Those who obtain it pass from the tramp department to the lodger department. This forms the greater part of the Men's Shelter, which is a large and commodious building, spotlessly clean. It contained (1903) 130 beds, of which 84 are for casuals. The remainder are cubicles, well ventilated, with bolts inside so that a man has perfect privacy.

Each man is temporarily supplied with clothes while his own are disinfected. In the basement is an engine room, two circular

saws, a large boiler, a boiler for hot water, and a very perfect steam disinfectant. The steam saw employs several men, who saw the wood into lengths suitable for chopping. Sets of men chop it and others "bundle" it. They work in gangs, a "bundler" to so many. There are two sorts of "bundling" machines; one requires a more expert "bundler" than the other. The men make fifty bundles a piece and then stop. This pays for supper and breakfast, but not bed, which is free. They commence work at 2 o'clock and work till their task is done. They are called at 5.30 a.m. or earlier if they wish, and turned out at 6.30 a.m., after having breakfast, to look for work. They return at 2 p.m. if they have not found it. Three nights are allowed each man before he is given up as a "loafer." The men use a large room fitted with deep basins, with hot water laid on, and can wash their clothes or feet. There is a steam drying chamber. A bath can be had for a penny. Soup and other food is cooked in large boilers and can be bought at a moderate price. A certain number of permanent men are employed for cleaning, and are taken from the "out of works," preference being given to married men.



Lockers are lent at 6d. or 1s. deposit. On the ground floor opposite the entrance is a distributive kitchen where food is served out, and to the right and left are two large and lofty rooms. One is the men's kitchen. It contains a very large stove, always lit. Pots and pans are lent and kept clean for the men. They may bring in food and cook it for themselves, or buy at the kitchen. A full dinner (joint, soup, &c.) costs 6d. A cubicle costs 6d. a night or 3s. a week. Last year 3,930 cubicles were let at 3s. a week, 12,990 at 6d. a night. The pressure on accommodation is very great, and other buildings are about to be erected. As many as 830 have been bedded out, but this arrangement is not satisfactory; 9,999 beds with meals were supplied last year. Of those received about a quarter are said to belong to the lowest stratum. The largest number of inmates are labourers, but there is a good sprinkling of men from the upper classes who are well educated. For these it is difficult to find employment. Besides the kitchen there is a comfortable reading-room with a fire. Prayers are held here, but attendance is optional.

A number of "shelters," "homes" and

relief yards have sprung up as it were spontaneously in various towns, which present some or all of the features of the one above described. The Church Army and the Salvation Army lead the way, but are rather labour *homes* than lodging-houses and Relief Stations. At the Church Army Homes a man is not expected to seek work during the first month. At the Army Shelters men are passed on to the "Elevators" if they require work. The women's Shelters provide for a large number of women who are earning a somewhat precarious livelihood. Many make them their home. In all these institutions there is some provision for a real requirement. But private charity cannot effectively meet a *national need*.

Recognising labour as a fluid, we need to provide channels for its flow as well as reservoirs for its storage. Relief Stations are needed, and municipal oversight of, and provision for, the migration of labour is a crying need. "Rowton" Houses, and Carrington House, Deptford, are examples of successful efforts to meet the need, but appear to be rather above the lowest class to be provided for.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE REALISATION OF THE IDEAL

**I**N the foregoing chapters an attempt has been made to show the practical measures that would by degrees rid us of the problem of the unemployed.

The conclusion is this: If well-organised Labour Markets with Labour Bureaux attached were situated in each of our trade centres, and provided steady work for our effectives by equalising trade depressions—if the ineffectives when weeded out were classified and dealt with separately by charitable institutions, backed up by a measure of State supervision and aid, and made partially or wholly self-supporting, and if the breeding of ineffectives was stopped—if the loafer, the thief of society, was treated penally—if the Poor Law was

reformed along these lines, and linked to municipal action, so as to provide adequately for the fluidity of labour, and for the promotion of effective education—if the central Government gave freedom to local action, but guided it into wise courses by accurate information and judicious subsidies—then we might see real progress made towards the *abolition of unemployment*, and this would itself sweep away many of the evils of our time.

It is the “Gospel of common sense” to proclaim that *unemployment is a curse to the community*.

A really earnest, enlightened, industrious nation would never allow the conditions of life that prevail among our “slum” population.

The national curse of drunkenness, the debasement of our manufactures, the adulteration of our food, the instability of our commercial system, are not so much causes as effects.

In the present stress and struggle Art is the slave of utility (falsely so called). The consequence is that life has lost its beauty, and the true “Utility” of noble living is lost sight of. To a large extent

excitement has taken the place which should be occupied by high ideals. This provides a fatal atmosphere for the young. The education of the eye by flaming posters announcing amusements, and of the mind by cheap papers with sensational stories, is going on apace. The football field is crowded, the lecture hall empty. Yet there are signs of an awakening. England has been stirred to think on the Education question. It may take long to work out on right lines a National Education in efficiency, but this is the line of progress. America and Germany are leading the way. Are we moving swiftly enough? This is the turning point of our fortunes. Are we facing in the right direction?

England is at heart sound on the Temperance question. The wave of interest in Temperance which is so marked may be succeeded by other waves of interest in kindred subjects. But no mere vague interest is sufficient. These "social questions" are *vital* ones, with which is bound up our salvation or destruction as a nation.

Gaze into our national "valley of dry bones." You see thousands of the "slain"

existing in a living death. "Famishing London" is the beggar covered with sores that lies at the gate of the modern Dives. Read the story of *one* street in East London, a story which might be multiplied hundred-fold. House after house with the father idle, the mother and children starving, the heavy hand of poverty upon the home, the widow and the fatherless crying to God, the rent and the rate "burdens too heavy to be borne." Who is responsible? How is Christian England going to settle her social problems? This is the true "Imperial Interest." The answer will determine her fate. But more is needed than the vision of the path to regeneration. When the prophet Ezekiel stood on the hill-top and gazed into the valley of dry bones, the question was pressed upon his heart, "Can these slain live?" He felt that God only knew. Silently the work of reconstruction went on under his eyes. But this was not enough. It was after all a dead army that lay at his feet. He was told to invoke the aid of a mightier agent, the breath of the Spirit, "to breathe on the slain, that they might live." The Spirit-breath brought life; they stood on their feet "an ex-

ceeding great army." The "slain" are with us to-day, the maimed, the wounded in the battle of life; the slums are our modern charnel-house. Dare we invoke the cleansing purifying agency of the Spirit of God? "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." The Spirit of the Lord is a sharp sword, a fan in the hand of God to thoroughly purge His floor. He may try our national life as by a whirlwind. "Who may abide the day of His coming." Yet dare we remain unpurged? Already we have tasted something of His judgments. The "Spirit of Christ" is the Spirit of Him who "had compassion on the multitudes because they were as sheep without a shepherd." His judgment rings the knell of selfish living. "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me." We may not let the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the prisoner, alone. If we do we are in peril of eternal condemnation. On the other hand, it was out of a nation of slaves that God shaped His chosen people. It was to the poor and the despised that Christ preached the Gospel of regeneration. All great up-

liftings of society have begun by the raising of the fallen.

Where shall we find our modern Moses? There are amongst us Christians who are direct descendants of those who left their homes under the compulsion of the Spirit of God, who believed in the Divine voice and followed the Divine call. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." George Fox, John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, and many others "live unto Him." Do their gifts descend in direct line upon others? The benediction of God has rested on godly living. The fruit of it is a wide culture, a high standard of education, a rich endowment with the "uncertain riches" of this life. "The learning of the Egyptians" is with us, but insight comes only from the Spirit of God. Can we hold wealth and education otherwise than as "trusts" to be used for the deliverance of our race? The call of Christ to sacrifice rings across the ages. We need the *devotion* of wealth and culture to the service of God. But money and enlightenment are not enough. We need the devotion of *lives* to social service. We need our best men and women for "guardians" and "councillors" (the names



show the nobility of the calling). We must no longer toy with charity by perfunctory work on committees, but throw ourselves into real service, and choose every channel of usefulness and self-devoted toil. We need *working* men and women in every form of Christian activity. What work is so scamped as religious work? It is not by Government action, if impeded by worldly ambition; nor by municipal action, if fettered by monetary considerations—it is not by these, united or alone, that our problems can be solved. The breath of the Spirit of Life must vitalise our rich as well as our poor.

We need a great revival of the religion of common life, a great wave of brotherliness. Christ is being crucified amongst us by the easy-going life, as well as by the famishing of the poor. The deepest of all wounds is not the wound in His hands or His feet, in those members far from Him, but the wound in His side, "the wound with which He is wounded in the house of His friends." We have amongst us men and women who set the ideal life before us and uplift the standard of the Cross, but they are few and far between. Half unconsciously we shrink

from *contact* with poverty. Yet Christ bids us go out into the streets and lanes of the city.

We need a fresh ideal of "Divine service" to sanctify our national life, no mere formal attendance at a meeting-house, but "devotion" in every detail to the common good. We need to be our best, that we may give our *best* to the service of God and our country. We need Patriotism instead of Party.

A great development of local "public spirit" is needed. "Our Empire" and "our country" are large units, but "our town" is a smaller unit, which it is possible to embrace in thought and live for in practice.

The town is essentially a unit, and tends to be an organism. The fuller development of municipal self-government, the widening of municipal areas to include under one authority the growing districts of our cities, might lead to more enlightened action with regard to the prevention of insanitary areas, to the planning of an effective corporate life and the development of local patriotism. Ancient patriotism was largely the love of the city. The ideal of a pure and beautiful

city life has been set before the world for ages. The harmonious city life exists in the imagination. "Jerusalem" is the city of peace, and the blessing of God rests on all who love her. The beautiful city is not only "built above," but it is a working ideal for the present. With its rich varied life, it has come to stay, men gather into towns, so full of keen interests and possibilities. The city is the republic where the "respublicæ" should be studied. Here lies "Utopia," where the good of all is the concern of each. To make our towns "cities of God," to weld human life together into an harmonious whole, to fit each life into the place of highest service, this is worth living for as an ideal. We must substitute for Babylon—the city of confusion—Jerusalem, the city of peace. In the former every one is striving for his own and misunderstanding his neighbour, in the latter each individual is fitted into place and approximates to the Divine type, and therefore the city is beautiful in the blended life of its inhabitants.

The art of Greece, the order of Rome, the daily service of Jerusalem will meet in the perfected city life. "Her children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the

peace of her children." The worship and service of God will become instinctive. It is only along this path that we catch a glimpse of perfected humanity. The quiet pastoral life is no longer possible. Those who seek it shirk duty, if they turn their back on the problems of the town—Christ himself found no other solution for the problems of His day save death for Jerusalem. He "must needs" set His face towards that vortex of national life which called for the supreme sacrifice. We cannot imagine Him dying of old age in the secluded solitude He loved. "It is expedient" that the one should die for the many. Only by following Him in the path of service can we expect that the long world-probation will end in the joy of union with His life. The apostle and the martyr have preached and suffered in the streets of the "modern Babylon" of their day for the ideal of the "new Jerusalem."

Here in our wilderness-cities are the multitudes without leaders, the wandering and wayward sheep. Here is the harvest field, and the labourers are few. Here is the path to the Cross. Here "amid life's throng and press" we may feel the invisible presence of

Christ. What rich men will come forward to devote their riches to His service? What women will "minister unto Him" in the person of His poor?

Are we to stand on one side till we see a way that is practical and practicable? Nay, wisdom is learned by practice, not by holding problems at arm's length. "The crooked" cannot be "made straight, and the rough places plain," save by hard work with spade or shovel. Difficulties exist to be overcome, and discipline comes in doing.

A nation of lives crushed to helplessness, shut in by apparently insurmountable barriers, sweated by taskmasters, with a Red Sea of difficulties in front, this is the call for Moses the deliverer, for there does exist a Divine way out, and those who tread it will be able to sing the "Song of Moses and of the Lamb."

Let us embrace the Ideal, and it will become the Real.

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